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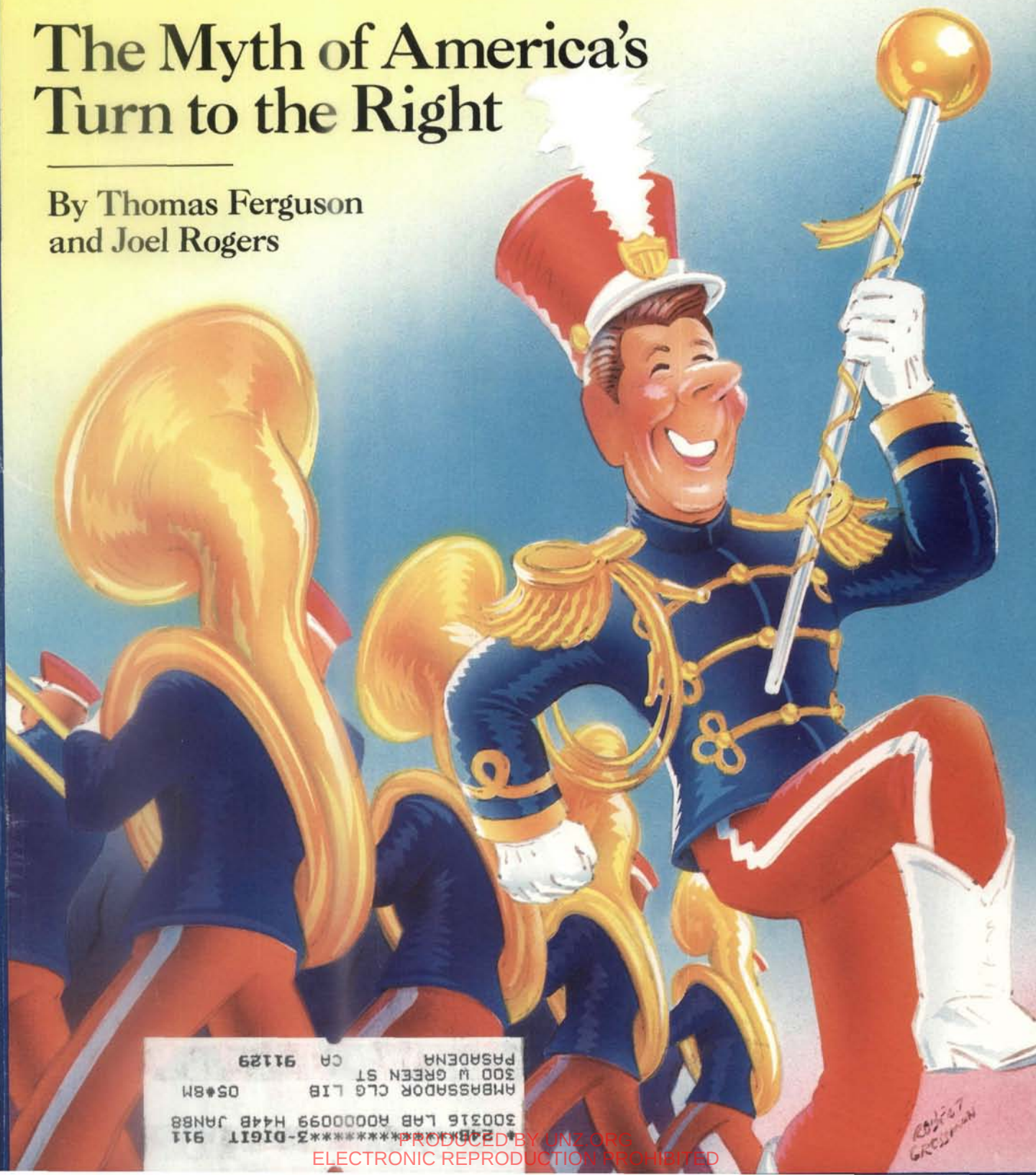
The Atlantic

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WOMEN AND SHOES / WHICH REMBRANDTS ARE BY REMBRANDT?

The Myth of America's Turn to the Right

By Thomas Ferguson
and Joel Rogers



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Subscriptions: 1 Year \$9.95,
2 Years \$15.95, 3 Years \$29.95
in the United States and its possessions;
\$3.00 additional per year in Canada;
\$5.00 additional per year elsewhere.
Address all subscription correspondence to
Atlantic Subscription Processing Center
Box 2547, Boulder, Colorado 80322
(800) 525-0643
In Colorado 1-447-9330

Printed in the U.S.A.
Copyright © 1986, by
The Atlantic Monthly Company
(ISSN 0276-9077)
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Public relations:
Linda Schraufnagl Rosso
Paul J. Vizza
2400 N Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 955-2157

Advertising sales:
420 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10170
(212) 687-2424

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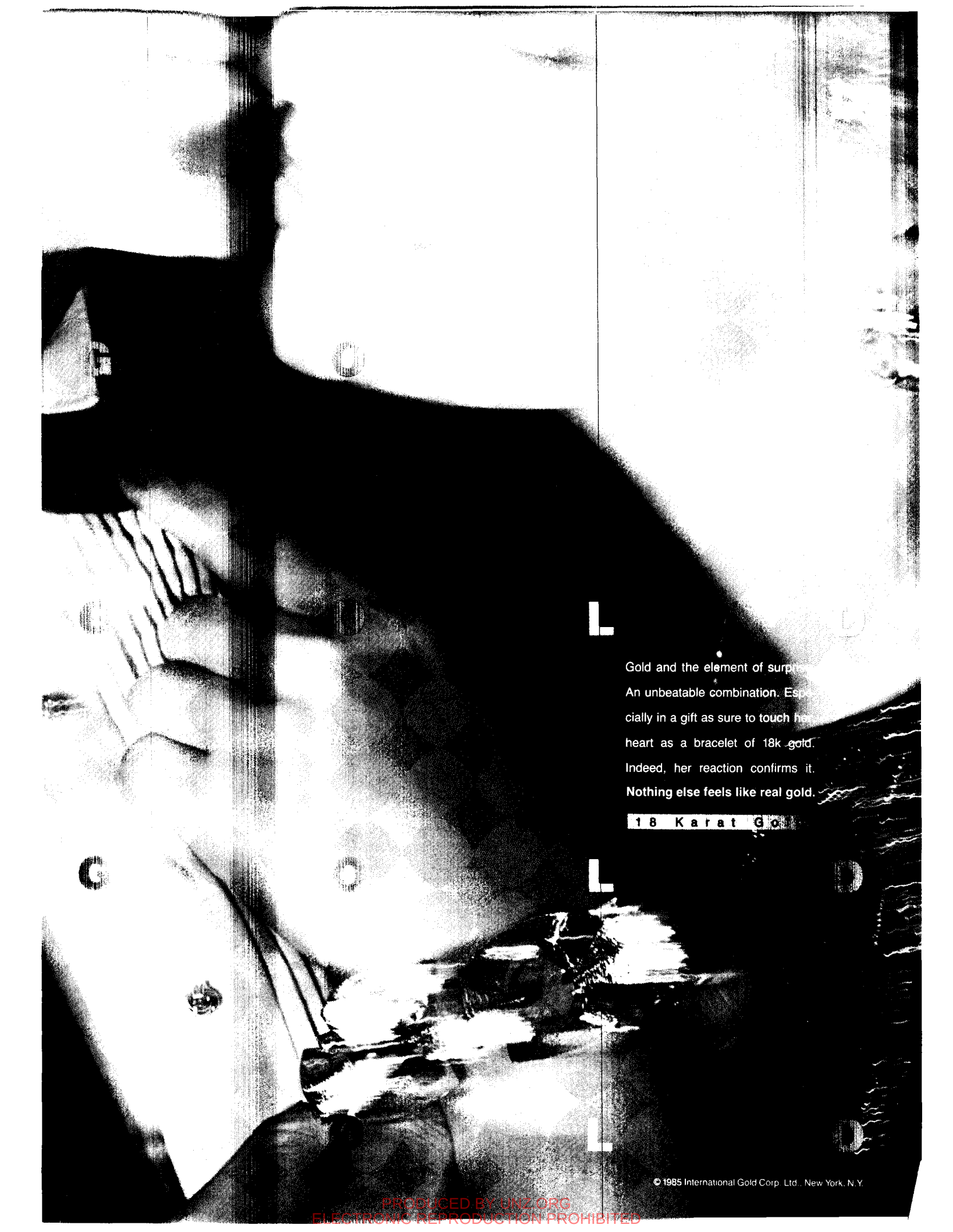
Wellesley, Massachusetts (617) 244-1174
John Nimmo

The Atlantic May 1986
Vol. 257 No. 5
Published monthly by
The Atlantic Monthly Company
8 Arlington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Second-class postage paid at
Boston, Toronto, and additional
mailing offices

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THOMAS FERGUSON and JOEL ROGERS ("The Myth of America's Turn to the Right") are the co-authors of *Right Turn: The Decline of the Democrats and the Future of American Politics*, to be published this summer by Hill & Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Ferguson is an associate professor of government at the University of Texas at Austin. He attended Marquette University and the Universität Salzburg, and holds masters degrees from Loyola University of Chicago and Princeton University. He received a Ph.D. in politics from Princeton in 1981. Ferguson is the author of the forthcoming book *Critical Realignment: The Fall of the House of Morgan and the Origins of the New Deal*. Joel Rogers is an assistant professor of political science at Rutgers University. He graduated from Yale University in 1972 and received a J.D. from Yale Law School in 1976. Rogers received a master's degree in politics from Princeton University in 1978 and a Ph.D. in 1984. He is the co-author, with Joshua Cohen, of *On Democracy* (1983) and is working on a book on U.S. labor policy. Ferguson and Rogers write the "Political Economy" column in *The Nation*. They are frequent contributors to *Le Monde Diplomatique* and other publications.

ROBERT GROSSMAN (cover artist) was born in New York in 1940 and graduated from Yale University in 1961. He has been a freelance illustrator since 1965. Known mainly for his caricatures and cartoons, Grossman is also a painter, sculptor, and creator of animated films. In 1978 he received an Academy Award nomination for his short film *Jimmy the C*.

CHARLES C. MOSKOS ("Success Story: Blacks in the Military") is a professor of sociology at Northwestern University. Moskos graduated from Princeton University in 1956. From 1956 to 1958 he served in the U.S. Army as a combat engineer in West Germany; he subsequently served in the Reserves. Moskos received both an M.A. (1961) and a Ph.D. (1963) in sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of several books, including *The American Enlisted Man* (1970), *Peace Soldiers* (1976), and *Greek Americans* (1980). Moskos is at work on a study of national service in the United States.

CHARLES C. MANN ("No Parking") is the co-author, with Robert Crease, of *The Second Creation: Makers of the Revolution in Twentieth Century Physics*, to be published this month.

CULLEN MURPHY ("Amsterdam: Defining Rembrandt") is *The Atlantic's* managing editor.

NICHOLAS EBERSTADT and CLIFFORD M. LEWIS ("Washington: How Many Are Hungry?") collaborate frequently. Eberstadt is a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a visiting fellow at the Center for Population Studies, at Harvard University. He is the author of two books, *Poverty in China* (1979) and *Fertility Decline in the Less Developed Countries* (1981). Clifford M. Lewis has worked on agricultural-trade issues in fifteen developing countries. Eberstadt and Lewis are writing a book about food security.

PADRAIG O'MALLEY ("Ulster: The Marching Season") is a senior associate of the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. He is also the author of *The Uncivil Wars: Ireland Today* (1983), for which he received the Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize, given by the National Book League, in London. O'Malley is at work on a book about the 1981 hunger strikes in Northern Ireland.

IAN FRAZIER ("The War We Knew: An Oral History") has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 1974. His book *Dating Your Mom*, a collection of humor pieces, was published earlier this year.

ROBERT BAUSCH ("The White Rooster") is an instructor in English at Northern Virginia Community College and George Mason University. He is the author of two novels, *On the Way Home* (1982) and *The Lives of Riley Chance* (1984).

BETH LORDAN ("Running Out") is pursuing a master of fine arts degree at Cornell University.

JANE HIRSHFIELD ("The Song") is a recipient this year of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Poetry. Hirshfield is the author of *Alaya*, a book of poems.

DIANE ACKERMAN ("Halley's Comet") is a contributing editor of *Parade* magazine and the director of the Writers' Program at Washington University, in St. Louis. She is the author of several books, including the collection of poems *Lady Faustus* (1983) and *On Extended Wings* (1985), a memoir about learning to fly.

LLOYD ROSE ("Out in the Cold") is a former literary manager of the New Playwrights' Theater, in Washington, D.C. Her articles on movies, theater, and popular culture appear often in *The Atlantic*.

JAMES FALLOWS ("The New Face of Toil") is *The Atlantic's* Washington editor.

PHOEBE-LOU ADAMS ("Brief Reviews") is a staff writer for *The Atlantic*.

EDWARD SOREL and NANCY CALDWELL SOREL ("First Encounters") live in Manhattan. Edward Sorel has been a freelance illustrator since 1957. He is the author and illustrator of *Making the World Safe for Hypocrisy* (1972) and the illustrator of many other books, including *Word People* (1970), written by his wife. Nancy Caldwell Sorel's second book, *Ever Since Eve*, was published in 1984.

WILLIAM H. YOUNGREN ("How Gershwin Played It") is an associate professor of English at Boston College. He writes widely about music and is pursuing a doctorate in musicology at Brandeis University.

HOLLY BRUBACH ("Shoe Crazy") is a staff writer for *The Atlantic*.

TERRENCE RAFFERTY ("Been There and Back") reviews books for *The Nation* and writes about film for a number of other publications.

BARBARA WALLRAFF ("A Pen for Your Thoughts") is an associate editor of *The Atlantic*.

DOROTHY OSBORNE ("Acrostic No. 10") crafts puzzles at her home in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

EMILY COX and HENRY RATHVON ("The Puzzler") create crossword puzzles for several publications.

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Editorial and Production Office

8 Arlington Street / Boston, Mass. 02116

Business Office

2400 N Street, N.W./Washington, D.C. 20037

Advertising Office

420 Lexington Avenue / New York, N.Y. 10170

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STUDENT-AID MUDDLE

In "The Student-Aid Muddle" (February *Atlantic*) Denis P. Doyle and Terry W. Hartle missed an important point: the public is paying for these grants and loans and the public deserves something in return.

General Hershey, of draft-board fame, once said that student deferments were partially designed to "channel young men into socially desirable occupations." For once, at least, he was right. The average workingman should not have to subsidize a student of ancient Chinese or English literature, or, God forbid, yet another corporate lawyer.

Before using his degree to enter a profession, a recipient of this public assistance should be required to work, at minimum wage, for a specified period. This includes doctors, lawyers, and M.B.A.s, who tend to forget who paid their bills.

MICHAEL BRANHUT

Philadelphia, Pa.

The article about student financial aid neglects to mention that the federal government pays all the interest on Guaranteed Student Loans while the student is in school. This is a major portion of the cost of that program. If interest rates decline, this cost will decline.

I particularly take issue with the allegations in the article regarding "private trade schools." This term apparently is used to include all post-secondary, non-collegiate institutions—only some of which are proprietary schools. The authors of this article allege that they were told by a Pennsylvania state official that thirty institutions, of which twenty-six were "private trade schools," accounted for 50 percent of the default rate in Pennsylvania. I have worked closely with the Guaranteed Student Loan program in Pennsylvania for many years, both as a school administrator and as a member of the advisory committees to the loan agency. I have never seen any statistics of this nature, and I suspect they are inaccurate.

When the history of these programs is written, some years from now, the benefits will be found to have far outweighed the difficulties, and will seem well worth

the cost involved. The history of the GI Bill provides a useful parallel.

PHILIP CHOSKY

President

Electronics Institutes

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Denis P. Doyle and Terry W. Hartle reply:

We are in complete agreement with Philip Chosky's comment about the importance of student aid to our national well-being but believe substantial improvements are needed in the programs that deliver it. His assertion about interest rates and program costs is true in theory. In practice, however, it hasn't worked that way. In 1980 the average ninety-one-day Treasury bill rate was 11.5 percent; today it is about seven percent. Nonetheless, federal costs in the guaranteed-loan program have grown from \$1.6 billion to approximately \$3.3 billion, the product of increased participation (more than a million additional students) and larger payments for defaulted loans. If interest rates rise, federal costs will swell nearly \$400 million for each percentage-point increase.

We did not say that thirty schools in Pennsylvania accounted for 50 percent of the default rate; we said that they accounted for 50 percent of the loan-default costs. That statement is correct.

DON QUIXOTE

It grieves me beyond measure that Martin Amis ("Broken Lance," March *Atlantic*) felt bound to read such a long and inaccessible book as *Don Quixote* if he did not enjoy it. Mr. Amis might have fared better, though, with a better translation. According to the translator's introduction, by Samuel Putnam, in my edition of *Don Quixote*, Tobias Smollett's translation of Cervantes is "merely a working over of Jarvis." And Jarvis's translation is "inclined to be ponderous and dull."

JOHN BARDIS

Jonesboro, Ga.

Don Quixote, when it is read in the original Spanish, is delightfully whimsical, tender, both funny and tragic, and not at all dull. However literal the translation may be, some things (for

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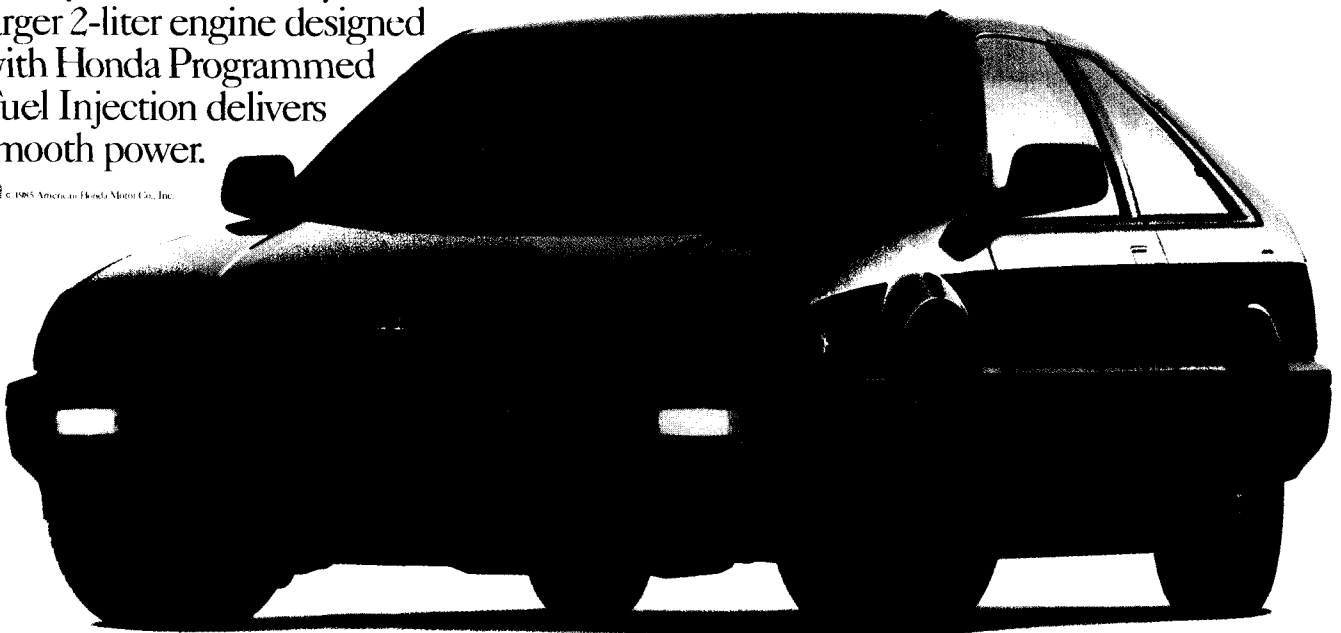
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example, poetry, humor, and puns) do not transpose well from one language to another.

Relying on interpreters to explain the vital words of diplomats, terrorists, or other communicators clearly places us at a disadvantage and at risk. For our own sake, perhaps the time has come for us to learn languages other than English.

PHYLLIS POE KINNEY
Cheyenne, Wyo.

DEEP-GAS THEORIES

David Osborne's article "The Origin of Petroleum" (February *Atlantic*) was well done and attempted to balance the arguments between the organic and inorganic proposals. A couple of points need mentioning.

The idea of drilling a basement impact crater to test for abiogenic hydrocarbons did not originate with Tom Gold. Nor did the idea that abiogenic hydrocarbons originating in the mantle could migrate along the fracture pattern from a large-scale basement impact.

These proposals were part of a lecture on impact craters I presented to the Petroleum Exploration Society of New York on September 20, 1979. Excerpts from that lecture were subsequently published in the January, 1981, issue of the *Journal of Petroleum Geology*, under the title "Impact Craters—Implications for Basement Hydrocarbon Production."

Prior to this paper, none of Mr. Gold's articles ever mentioned any possible relationship between impact craters and abiogenic hydrocarbons. One now gets the impression, from reading his articles on the Siljan Ring, listening to his lectures, and watching him on TV, that he alone is the originator of the impact-crater concept.

Siljan is among the worst craters to test for abiogenic hydrocarbons and represents a distortion of the impact theory I first presented to our PESNY members and later published. We must not in any way consider the pending disaster at Siljan a legitimate test for abiogenic hydrocarbons. To do so will curtail needed research on other basement impact structures that are viable exploration targets.

RICHARD R. DONOFRIO
President
Astro Geological Resources
Ridgefield, Conn.

We are told that drilling the Siljan structures in Sweden will provide the critical test of conventional hydrocarbon theories versus Professor Gold's theory of deep sources. Not so. Geological literature on the Siljan region and recent seismic profiles both strongly suggest that Precambrian sedimentary rocks are present beneath much of the prospect area. These might well be the sources of the hydrocarbon seeps that have long been known in the Siljan region.

ALLAN K. GIBBS
Assistant Professor
Department of Geological Sciences
Cornell University
Ithaca, N.Y.

Dr. Gold's theory about unlimited supplies of deep-earth gas and petroleum is fascinating; if true, as David Osborne notes, it will turn much geological theory upside down. However, such a discovery would change little regarding the world's energy situation. Energy is part of the very fabric of the universe and is, in principle, unlimited. The problem is not finding energy per se but devising technologies sufficiently ingenious to extract it at a price we can afford and in a manner we can tolerate.

From the global perspective, potential sources of energy are not in short supply. The energy that arrives on our planet each year from the sun is 12,000 times the world's total energy needs. Fifty-five times the world's total needs is available from biomass (plants growing) each year, forty times from the wind and waves, and five times from geothermal energy. Deep-earth gas would add another immense pool of potential energy, but even this potential, combined with solar, biomass, wind, wave, and geothermal energy, pales in comparison with the physical potential in basic nuclear forces. Using a tiny fraction—0.1 percent—of the globe's oceans in fusion-power plants would provide 20 million times the world's annual energy needs. Similarly, a mere 0.1 percent of the uranium in the globe's crust has the potential, through nuclear fission, to provide 100,000 times the world's total annual energy needs.

Of course, one should not forget that nature's potential is limited by the practical realities of engineering. I suspect that any attempt to extract deep-earth gas will present practical and economic hurdles more than equal to those hinder-

ing the full development of all our other "unlimited" energy sources.

MARK P. MILLS
President
Science Concepts, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

David Osborne replies:

Richard Donofrio is correct in saying that the idea of drilling a basement impact crater to test for abiogenic hydrocarbons did not originate with Gold. My article stated very plainly that Gold originally thought of impact craters only as migration routes; then, when he received Donofrio's paper, he realized that they might contain crushed rock with sufficient porosity to act as reservoirs. Gold, in speaking with me, has never sought credit for that idea. Indeed, it was Gold who first referred me to Donofrio. (Whether Gold or Donofrio initially had the idea that impact craters might be migration routes is anybody's guess; Donofrio did publish it first, but how can he be so sure that it had entered his mind before it ever occurred to Gold? Gold says simply that he thought of it on his own and later, from Donofrio, got the idea of impact craters as reservoirs.)

As for the Siljan Ring drilling project, my article gave full play to the negative opinions expressed by Donofrio's Independent Expert Evaluation Team. The team member I cited was Fred Vlierboom, to whom I was referred by Donofrio. I made it very clear in the piece that different scientists hold wildly different views of the chances of finding gas or oil in the Siljan Ring.

The sedimentary rocks in the Siljan Ring to which Professor Gibbs refers are well known. They are also relatively shallow, thought to be no more than a thousand feet deep at their deepest. In my article I mentioned that they might be the source of oil seeps in the area. But I also pointed out that the Swedish project will drill to a depth of more than 15,000 feet. No one believes that gas or oil found at even 2,000 feet—much less 15,000 feet—could have originated in sediments only a thousand feet deep.

I also have to disagree with Mr. Mills. I believe that if the abiogenic theory is correct, it will fundamentally change our conception of the amount of extractable oil and gas left in the earth. We will begin to search in areas of the world which we have long ignored—along rift zones, under methane hydrates, and so on.

Finally, a sentence in my earlier reply

(April "Letters to the Editor") was garbled in editing. It should have read: "Given the degree of uncertainty involved, Gold persuaded NASA to enlarge the feet on the landing craft and unsuccessfully argued that the astronauts should be tied on a line, as they might be on a glacier, in case they hit weak spots."

FINE ARTS

John Harris's "Storia dell'Arte 101" (February *Atlantic*) includes a glaring error of natural history: poison ivy is a New World plant and hence could not have been burned in medieval bonfires.

GEORGE REIGER
Locustville, Va.

John Harris's "Storia dell'Arte 101" is proof, alas, that truth is stranger than whimsy: Saint Clare, founder of her order, was a contemporary (1193–1253) of Saint Francis of Assisi. She, like all the religious community of Assisi, looked forward each year to Saint Francis's

Christmas sermon. One year Clare was unable to attend the fervently awaited sermon because she was sick and confined to her cell. Despairing, she prayed that she might somehow get to see and hear Saint Francis. Her prayers were answered: she had a vision of the sermon in her cell, transmitted live. For this media event Pope Pius XII (no stranger to visions), on February 14, 1958, proclaimed Saint Clare patroness of the television industry. Her feast day is August 12.

CHARLES PERRONE
Burlington County College
Pemberton, N.J.

John Harris replies:

I would like to thank Mr. Reiger for his information but cannot. Poison ivy was brought to the New World, whereupon it died out in the Old World.

I thank Mr. Perrone for his response to my article. He might be interested to know that Saint Stella of Palermo (1333–1417), who had the same vision every night for seventy-four years, is under consideration as patroness of the VCR. It is comforting to think that mysticism

and technology remain on some kind of par.

Regarding John Harris's review of *Felice: The Wolf Girl of Roanoke*, by Tess Miro ("Christmas Books," December *Atlantic*): Please note that the City of Roanoke, Virginia, was founded in 1882. Prior to that time the crossroads was known as Big Lick. In the Roanoke Valley the present City of Salem dates back to the eighteenth century as a settlement. Perhaps Ms. Miro's reference was intended to be the Roanoke River Valley.

NORMAN D. FINTEL
Roanoke College
Salem, Va.

John Harris replies:

The Culture Press thanks Mr. Fintel and assures him that Tess Miro and the CP Staff are nonplussed by this lapse of editorial vigilance. Erratum slips are even now being rushed into print. They will inform concerned readers that the correct title of Ms. Miro's book is *Felice: The Wolf Girl of the Crossroads Known as Big Lick*.

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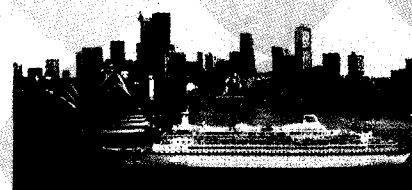
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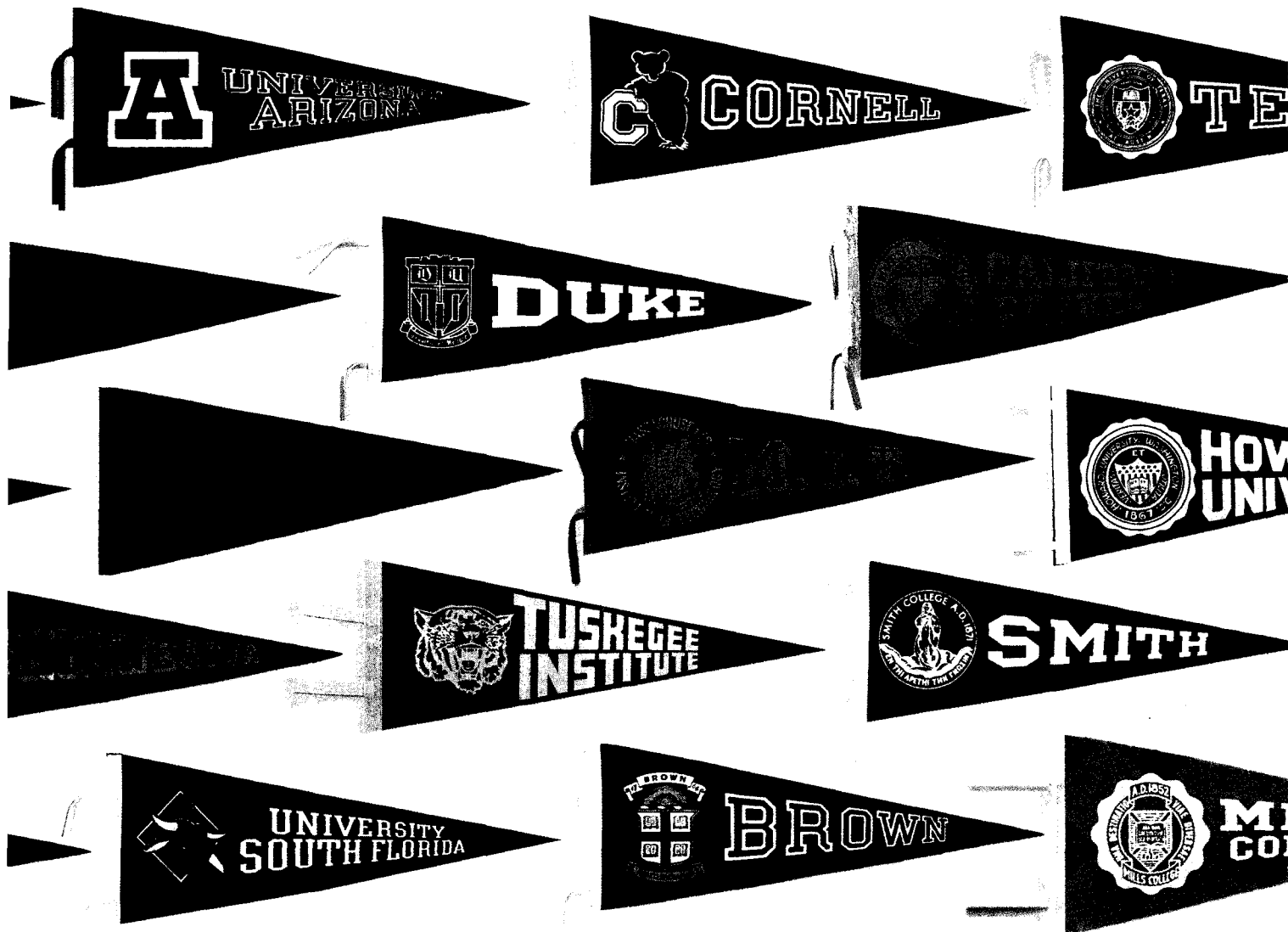
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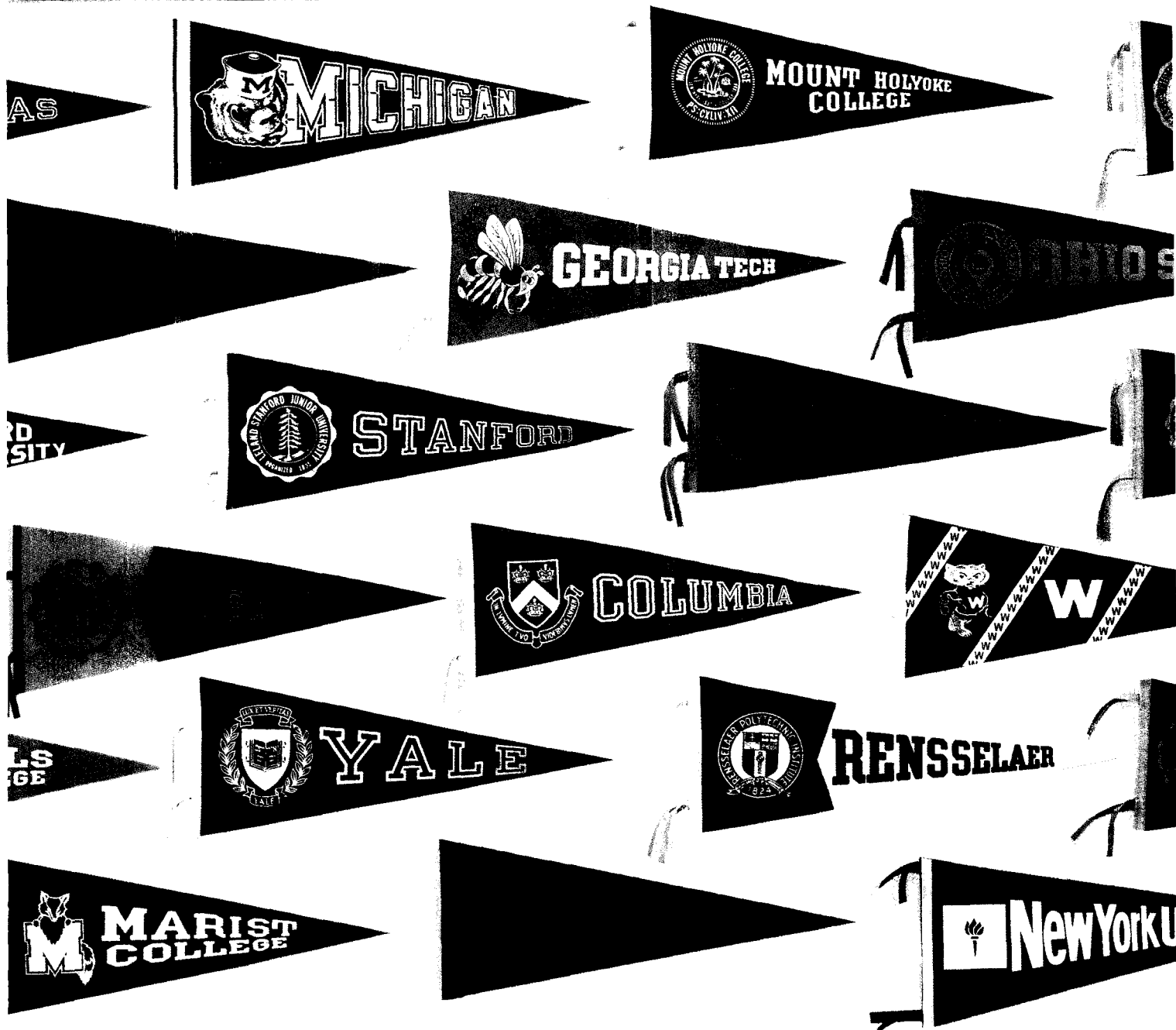


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WEATHER PROBLEMS

Cullen Murphy ("Under the Weather," February *Atlantic*) set himself up perfectly for the point I was waiting for him to make. But it eluded him.

Weathermen, once optimists all, with smiles beaming through isobarred Plexiglas, are now a dour lot, looking for the metaphorical carcinogens in every beam of sunshine. Winter wasn't cold enough; now the evil windchill has whipped off our last blanket. All this Mr. Murphy points out. But the proof of the pudding is this: *they never give us the windchill factor in the summer.*

They could. Nothing's stopping them. But weathermen pretend that the windchill factor vanishes after March 21. Or is it that they pack it away in a large crate, cart it up to the attic, and make room for it by dragging downstairs to the control room a dozen cases of Humidex?

BRUCE MOHUN
Toronto, Ontario

I'm jealous of the Weather Man.
Although he's wrong that night,

Most people always seem to think
The next day he'll be right.
But let *me* make an errant guess—
Their patience will expire;
And then I hear them muttering
"Congenital" and "liar."

ROGER WILLIAMS
New York, N.Y.

UNFINISHED SCHUBERT

In his article "More Unfinished Schubert" (January *Atlantic*) William H. Youngren refers to the symphony in E major that Schubert composed in August of 1821 and says, "In 1881 Grove's friend John Francis Barnett prepared an orchestral version that was performed at the Crystal Palace in 1883. Unfortunately, Barnett's version is now lost."

Fortunately, Barnett's version has been recently found, and I was pleased to play a small part in this rediscovery.

While browsing in a bookstore in Lawrence, Kansas, I came across an old copy of Flower's biography of Schubert. Inserted in the book was a copy of the *Musical Courier* of 1928, which contained

an article suggesting that the Cleveland Orchestra Archives might include that work. After I contacted the librarian, Mr. R. Whitaker, a search was made and Barnett's version of the Schubert Seventh Symphony was found.

We are not aware of any other existing copy of this version.

ROBERT H. KURTH, M.D.
Mission, Kansas

I enjoyed William Youngren's "More Unfinished Schubert." I question, however, his idea that "Schubert has taken his rightful place in the very first rank of composers . . ." only ". . . in the past fifty years." The city of Chicago has given him that position for more than eighty years. Orchestra Hall was built in 1905. Carved into the limestone over the entrance are the names of five composers: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Wagner.

KNOX C. HILL
Chicago, Ill.

William H. Youngren replies:

That Dr. Kurth has unearthed Barnett's orchestration of the Schubert Sev-

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enth is very exciting news indeed, and I congratulate him on his detective work. Perhaps Christoph von Dohnanyi can be persuaded to undertake the score with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra.

As a native Chicagoan whose memories of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra go back more than forty years, to the days of Theodore Thomas's successor, Frederick Stock, I am delighted to learn from Mr. Hill that my home town recognized Schubert's greatness in 1905. But I stand by what I wrote. The two long Tovey essays reprinted in "*The Main Stream of Music*" and *Other Essays*, which were originally published in 1927 and 1928, were pioneering efforts to win for Schubert the high place that he was not then generally granted even in England. And as late as 1935 Tovey felt the need to preface the analyses of Schubert symphonies in the first volume of *Essays in Musical Analysis* with a note that contained the following passage:

Critics of literature and the fine arts are better trained [than music critics] to recognize in imperfect examples the qualities which will produce perfection under special conditions: thus

they do not so constantly make the mistake of assuming that work which shows the highest qualities can be outweighed by work which does not. Such a mistake is obviously made . . . when we say that Shakespeare was "no artist" because he very often neglected his art; and such a mistake is made, less obviously, but more grossly, when we say that Schubert is no master of form because any fool can see where Schubert fails.

ADVICE & CONSENT

In his review of Jean Denis Bredin's *The Affair: The Case of Alfred Dreyfus*, Alistair Horne ("The Prisoner of Devil's Island," February *Atlantic*) describes the central piece of evidence in the case against Dreyfus—the *bordereau*, or memorandum—as a forgery. This is erroneous. The *bordereau* was a note written by Esterhazy, a French officer who spied for Germany, to the German military attaché in Paris. The French intelligence service intercepted the *bordereau* and mistakenly identified Dreyfus as its author, largely because of a similarity

between the handwriting of the two men.

CHRISTOPHER LARSON
New York, N.Y.

I wish to express my gratitude to Philip Langdon ("Burgers! Shakes!" December *Atlantic*) for correctly crediting my father, Stanley Meston, as the architect of McDonald's. Ray Kroc wrote a particularly tacky little book called *Grinding It Out: The Making of McDonald's*, which failed to mention my father.

I have subtitled my copy "The Making of Megalomania."

JESSICA MESTON FREEMAN
Baton Rouge, La.

I have been reading *The Atlantic* for more than fifteen years and I have never solved a puzzle appearing in your publication. Furthermore, I have never attempted to solve any of the puzzles. I do not even read the clues to see if I can "get just one." This has not required the use of pets or mechanical or spiritual devices.

DAVID W. SCHWARZ
New Orleans, La.

Smoke

please try Carlton.



REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES No PARKING

RESTRAINED BY THE Constitution from forbidding car ownership outright, the city fathers of New York have tried to discourage driving in Manhattan by every bureaucratic maneuver known to humanity. Heavy fines are levied for minor traffic infractions, and the streets are covered with signs that say DON'T EVEN THINK OF PARKING HERE. Tow trucks prowls relentlessly, ever ready to drag automobiles to a lot in the only part of Manhattan that is farther from the rest of the borough than New Jersey. Manhattan's Bureau of Traffic Operations is rumored to have a special squad of battered station wagons whose plainclothes drivers park by Braille, reducing bumpers to tinfoil wherever they go. Legend has it that automobile storage on Park Avenue is so expensive that socialites find it cheaper to pay armed guards to sit in the driver's seat overnight. Garages charge as much per hour as psychiatrists do. "Gee," out-of-town friends say to me, "you'd have to be crazy to own a car here."

I am crazy. I own a car in Manhattan. And there must be lots of crazy people here, because there are zillions of cars. The real test of my lunacy is not any of the things mentioned above. It is alternate-side-of-the-street parking. ASOTSP is a fiendishly ingenious system whereby, for the ostensible reason of permitting street cleaners to pass through, one side of a road is closed to parking for three hours on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the other side of the street is closed for the same three hours on Tues-

day, Thursday, and Saturday. Allow me to explain: At a certain hour—11:00 A.M. in my neighborhood—half the parking spaces vanish. No parking spaces open up to replace them. Six times a week a mob of desperate parkers suddenly floods the street. *Oh my God, it's Thursday. Listen, Frank, I gotta get off the line. It's eleven o'clock—I gotta park—*

I suspect that the unknown genius who thought up this system believed that ASOTSP would rid Manhattan of cars in a week. Its failure—indeed, the presence of cars in Manhattan at all—can be read as a testament to the human spirit. Instead of creating a calmer, auto-free metropolis, ASOTSP has fostered the longest-running act of collective civil disobedience I've ever heard of. Every day but Sunday thousands of New Yorkers, most of them ordinary, middle-class people with kids and dogs and dangerous plaque buildup, go out and commit double-parking en masse. That is, they get in their cars and drive five feet

to park next to the cars on the other side of the street. (The stratagem works, as far as I can tell, because the tow truck drivers throw up their hands in despair when confronted with neighborhoods packed bumper-to-bumper with double-parked cars.) When three hours are up, the owners scurry out of their offices and apartments and drive back to the side of the street they started from. I go through this procedure three times a week. In so doing I claim victory over New York City. So do scads of other alternate-side-of-the-street Rambos.

SUCH VICTORY DOES NOT come cheap. The Big Apple is a tenacious adversary; if you forget to move your car, it will be towed to a vast, dim, hangarlike structure on the Hudson River that looks something like the set for the last scene in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. In the middle of a staggering number of dusty automobiles is a small office and a line of furious people. After showing your registration and driver's license, you are allowed to fork over almost a hundred dollars for the privilege of learning how much damage the tow truck has done to your suspension. The office walls are covered with dolorous graffiti, the employees have never awarded or been awarded a smile in their working lives, and invariably the man ahead of you has 1) not brought his registration and 2) decided to see if he can argue his car out without paying.

While the city administration battened down the hatches in preparation for Hurricane Gloria, every car owner in Manhattan greeted the news of the storm with joy, for it meant that the tow trucks would be garaged. I was raised a Protestant, but I have come to look forward to Jewish holidays like Succoth and Rosh Hashanah, because ASOTSP is suspended. When I pick up my morning





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Times I immediately turn to page B1, where the parking news is published, in hopes of learning that the city has at last given Saint Simeon Stylites his due and will suspend ASOTSP on his feast day.

In addition to broadening my religious education, ASOTSP has taught me a little-known law of physics: *If X is the number of (legal and illegal) parking spaces before street cleaning, X-minus-one is the number during and after street cleaning.* This means that if you are the last on your block to try to double-park, you will not be able to find a spot on your street, and you may be condemned to circle the neighborhood for three hours, a grumbling miniature of the Flying Dutchman in a VW Rabbit.

After one such experience with musical cars, you take care to double-park a little early—at 10:50, say, if the deadline is 11:00. You soon notice that everybody else is coming out then, so you begin moving your car at 10:45. Inevitably, crowd pressure would drive the double-parking time back to dawn if the police did not step in. In my neighborhood a patrol vehicle goes around at about 10:20, ticketing double-parked cars. As soon as it rounds the corner, hordes of double-parkers throng the street, rushing in its path like cockroaches converging on a trail of sugar. By 10:40 no places are left for the tardy.

Parking legally—that is, going back to your original space at 2:00—is even harder. I don't know why—maybe because there's a small number of Manhattanites who don't ever move their cars but instead temporarily move their offices to the driver's seat. Armed with briefcases and portable phones, they solemnly pretend that they just pulled off the road to sell some bonds on an emergency basis. (I used to know a deli owner in Greenwich Village who sat in front of his store for three hours, yelling at the clerks over a walkie-talkie.) In my area, the Upper West Side, people go down to the street at about 1:30. They hang around outside for a few minutes, eyeing each other suspiciously, waiting for the first fellow to make a move. Somebody jingles his keys and furious action ensues. By 1:35 the show is over.

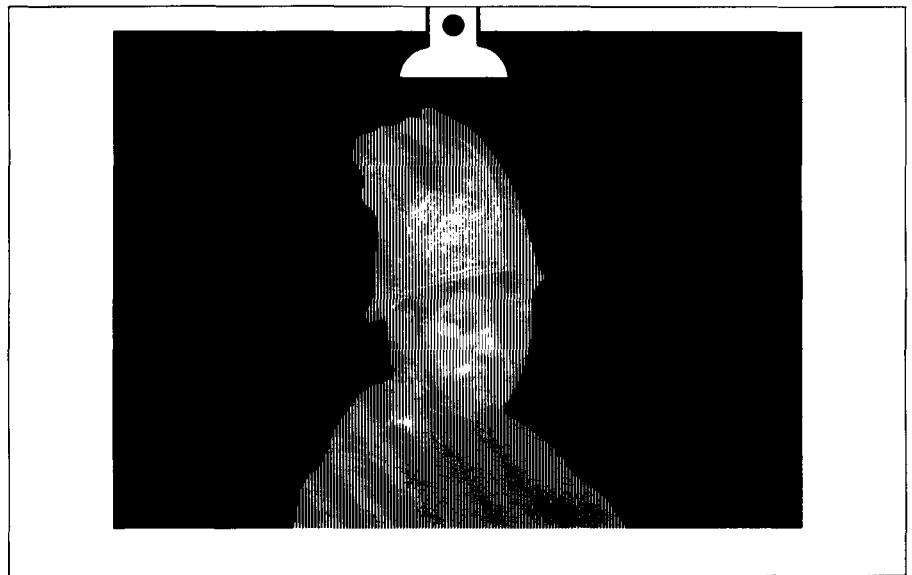
THERE IS A fine mixture of competition and cooperation in the ASOTSP game. Evolutionary biologists should note that the same people who rush like antic bears for the scarce nutrients (parking spots) also lower their genetic

fitness (ability to move around freely) by sticking slips of paper with their phone numbers on the dashboard, thus allowing the poor fish blocked in by the double-parkers a chance to get out. This means that on my street half the automobile owners are at certain times trapped in their apartments, unable to go to the corner newsstand because some strangers might want to use their cars. If people can agree on such things in New York City, a town not known for its adherence to the social contract, arms control may be possible after all.

The urge to own a car is said to be etched deep in the American heart. I

hope it's true, because if it isn't I really *am* crazy. I have moved to New York, the only city in the United States where you don't need to be a slave to the automobile, and made myself a slave to my automobile. I have become a slave while knowing full well that the idiotic insistence of people like me on owning cars in Manhattan is leading the city to terminal gridlock. If everyone is either part of the problem or part of the solution, then I'm part of the problem. I salve my conscience with the thought that the crime of owning a car in New York City is its own punishment.

—Charles C. Mann



AMSTERDAM

DEFINING REMBRANDT

Art historians are still trying to establish which paintings are by the master and which ones are not

LAST NOVEMBER West Berlin's Staatliche Museen let it be known that *The Man With the Golden Helmet* was not, as long supposed, a work by Rembrandt Hermanszoon van Rijn. The painting had been one of the most popular in the oeuvre attributed to the artist. It appears on coasters, posters, and playing cards. In phosphorescent hues it has been replicated on velvet. The revelation took the public by surprise and received considerable attention in the press. As it happens, however, connoisseurs of Dutch art had suspected the painting's misattribution for quite some time. *The*

Man With the Golden Helmet was but the latest casualty in a century-old battle to "purify" the corpus of Rembrandt's work.

Far more Rembrandt paintings seem to have been bought and hung than the artist ever produced. No one knows how many portraits, landscapes, history paintings, and genre scenes Rembrandt actually created (his output was prodigious), but more than a few museums still display works over his name which curators are fairly sure did not come from his hand. During the 1930s the art historian Abraham Bredius catalogued 630 paintings by Rembrandt, in public and private collections, "whose authenticity," he wrote, "seems to me beyond all doubt." Art historians today believe that of those 630 paintings 250 or more are very likely not by Rembrandt.

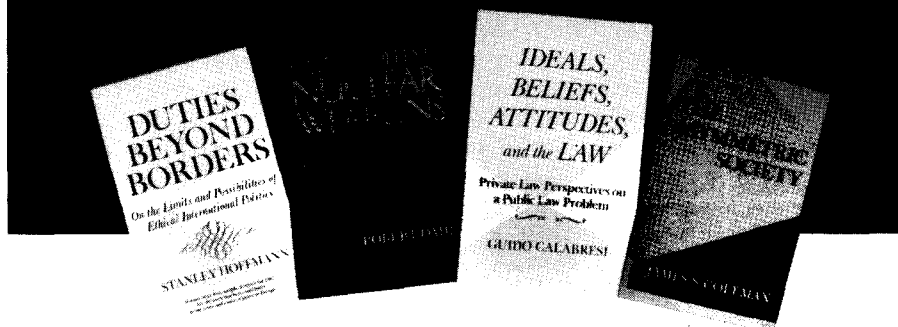
In New York, at The Frick Collection, the renowned *Polish Rider*, one of the most familiar paintings in the museum's holdings, trots into an uncertain future. A few blocks away, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, at least two works dis-

played as Rembrandts—*The Auctioneer* and *Christ With a Pilgrim's Staff*—are regarded as suspect by some scholars, including one member of the museum's staff. In the main storeroom for European paintings, behind the gallery walls at the Met, are eighteen more paintings that entered the museum as Rembrandts but were subsequently presumed to be or established as the work of others—generally of painters who have not yet been identified. Several of these are paintings that I grew to love on childhood trips into the city. A *Head of Christ* that once helped to clarify my image both of Jesus and of Rembrandt is now in storage.

Rembrandt has been a peculiarly difficult case, and he himself is partly to blame. In Leiden (where he was born) and Amsterdam (where he lived from about 1632 until his death, in 1669) he was a teacher of considerable repute and unusual power; everyone who came into his orbit began to paint like him. Govert Flinck, Ferdinand Bol, Carel Fabritius, Willem Drost, Gerard Dou—these and a hundred other artists learned most of what they would know about painting in the shadow of Rembrandt's easel. In their later careers some of them continued to follow faithfully every swerve and advance in the master's method. Although Rembrandt, unlike Rubens, never employed pupils to work on his own paintings, he sometimes worked on theirs. Hanging at the Rembrandt house, on the Jodenbreestraat, in Amsterdam, is a pen-and-wash drawing by Constantijn van Renesse that shows obvious signs of intervention by Rembrandt to strengthen the composition. (The sketch hangs expressly to illustrate Rembrandt's role as a teacher.) In rare cases Rembrandt's contribution to a student's work included a signature. "Changed and overpainted by Rembrandt 1636": these words, in Rembrandt's hand, appear on Flinck's *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac*, in Munich. On other paintings an authentic signature may appear without comment. Guild regulations in seventeenth-century Amsterdam permitted the sale of a student's works under his master's name.

Compounding the problem of misattribution is the existence of numerous imitations and forgeries. Though he died bankrupt, Rembrandt was a successful painter who commanded high fees. Then as now, owning a Rembrandt was a mark of distinction. Imitations of Rembrandt's work appeared during his

Who gets? Who does not? Who decides?

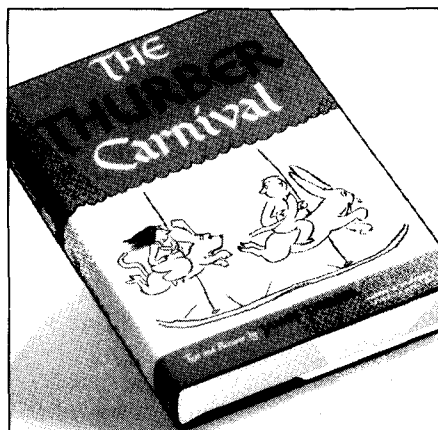


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lifetime; their number grew as the years passed, in response to mounting demand from dealers, speculators, and collectors. The trade in forgeries waxed during the nineteenth century especially, because the hallmark qualities of Rembrandt's paintings—the contrast, often surreal, of shadow and light, the dramatic composition, the restrained application of color—appealed powerfully to the new Romantic sensibility in European taste. If the imitations lacked a pedigree, so did all but a handful of authentic Rembrandts. Believing that only Rembrandt could be Rembrandtish, nineteenth-century connoisseurs—"expansionist" rather than "reductionist" in outlook—welcomed hundreds of dubious paintings into the fold.

Imposing some sort of critical order on the Rembrandt oeuvre has taken time, and the tension between expansionist and reductionist tendencies is felt to this day. At the turn of the century Wilhelm von Bode (who acquired *The Man With the Golden Helmet* for the Berlin museum) collaborated with Cornelis Hofstede de Groot to produce a lavish, eight-volume catalogue of Rembrandt paintings. Von Bode and Hofstede de Groot ruled out a number of reputed Rembrandts and ruled in several new discoveries, but on the whole they remained "somewhat large hearted" (as Hofstede de Groot himself complained of an earlier generation of critics) about how much to accept as genuine. They validated 595 paintings. More generous still was Wilhelm Valentiner, whose various catalogues designated well over 700 paintings as authentic Rembrandts. An American, John C. van Dyke, halved the total in 1923. Van Dyke's instincts were correct, but many of the paintings he excluded (or included) were not wisely chosen. Abraham Bredius subsequently raised van Dyke by more than two hundred while reducing Valentiner by about half that number. In the early 1960s a catalogue by Kurt Bauch admitted 562 paintings into the Rembrandt corpus. A contemporaneous list by Jakob Rosenberg accepted thirty-three of the paintings rejected by Bredius and rejected some forty of the paintings Bauch catalogued as authentic. In 1968 Horst Gerson, who as a young man had assisted Abraham Bredius, produced a revised edition of the Bredius catalogue in which the number of accepted Rembrandt paintings was reduced to about 420. Although each of the successive catalogues made use of, and benefited from, the alluvial deposits

of artistic scholarship, none of them provided a critical apparatus of any great sophistication. In 1969, when the tricentennial of Rembrandt's death was observed, there still existed no true catalogue raisonné of the master's paintings—no catalogue in which all of the physical, stylistic, and documentary evidence pertinent to every painting ascribed to Rembrandt was examined.

THE YEARS LEADING up to the tricentennial were ones of considerable stimulation in the small world of Rembrandt scholarship. Conferences were held, exhibits opened, books and monographs published. In 1968 a group of seven Amsterdam-based art historians and conservators convened to launch the Rembrandt Research Project and assume the responsibility for producing a catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt's paintings. In so doing they assumed the obligation not only of deciding which of the pictures attributed to Rembrandt were actually his and which ones were not but also of explaining the difference. This is not to say that museums have been regarding their own collections uncritically; the National Gallery in London (a pioneer in the field of Dutch paintings) and the Metropolitan in New York, along with many other museums, continually scrutinize the paintings in their possession. From time to time, when the evidence warrants, they publish updated assessments of their holdings. The research project, however, was not to be an intramural affair, and its focus was not to be limited to the works in any one institution.

With funding from the Dutch government the members of the project set out to examine physically and analyze scientifically every painting that Abraham Bredius had attributed to Rembrandt (along with a handful of others that have come to light in the postwar years). That task has more or less been completed—though the whereabouts of perhaps a dozen pictures, presumed to be in private collections, are still unknown—and publication of the findings is now under way. The first volume of the research project's *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, covering the painter's Leiden years (1625–1631), was published in 1982. The second volume, dealing with Rembrandt's first few years in Amsterdam, will appear in several months. Three more volumes are planned for publication within the next five or six years.

Needless to say, given the scholarly and commercial implications, the publication of Volume II is awaited with interest by collectors and curators around the world. The Rembrandt Research Project speaks with considerable—though not unquestioned—authority. Its members include Simon H. Levie, the director of Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum; Pieter J. J. van Thiel, the Rijksmuseum's curator of paintings; Ernst van de Wetering, an art historian on the staff of the Central Research Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science, in Amsterdam; Bob Haak, the director of the Amsterdam Historical Museum and the author of an important Rembrandt biography; and Josua Bruyn, a professor emeritus of art history at the University of Amsterdam, who is the spokesman for the project. J. G. van Gelder, the eminent Rembrandt connoisseur, and J. A. Emmens, the iconographer, were members of the group until their deaths.

In Volume I of its catalogue the research project considered ninety-three of what Bredius had accepted as early paintings by Rembrandt. It authenticated forty-two of them, rejected forty-four, and reserved judgment on seven. Another hundred or so paintings will be considered in Volume II. Although project members are reluctant to discuss the contents of the catalogue's next installment, it is probably safe to assume that what has always been viewed as a particularly fruitful period in Rembrandt's career—the years 1631 to 1634, when clients had to beg him as well as pay him, according to one contemporary source—will be shown to have been somewhat less fruitful than has been supposed. It is also likely that the number of paintings assigned to one or another of Rembrandt's students will be modestly augmented. And several of the authentications put forward in Volume I are almost certain to be withdrawn in Volume II.

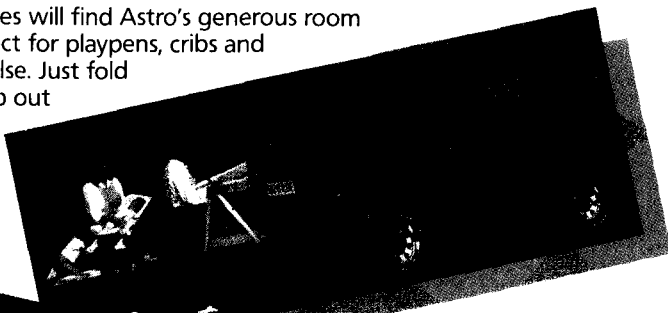
It is impossible to consider the work of the Rembrandt Research Project without thinking, at least at first, in terms of winners and losers. One is dealing with an artist whose paintings, were they all to be sold individually at auction, would probably fetch an average of \$5 million apiece. (A painting by one of his better students would be lucky to go for a tenth of that sum.) But mercantile concerns are not uppermost in the minds of the members of the research project. Their interest in delimiting the Rembrandt oeuvre derives chiefly from an

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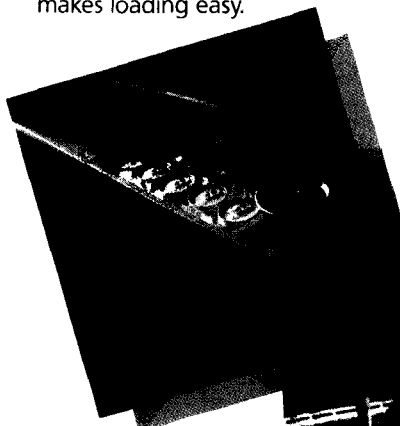
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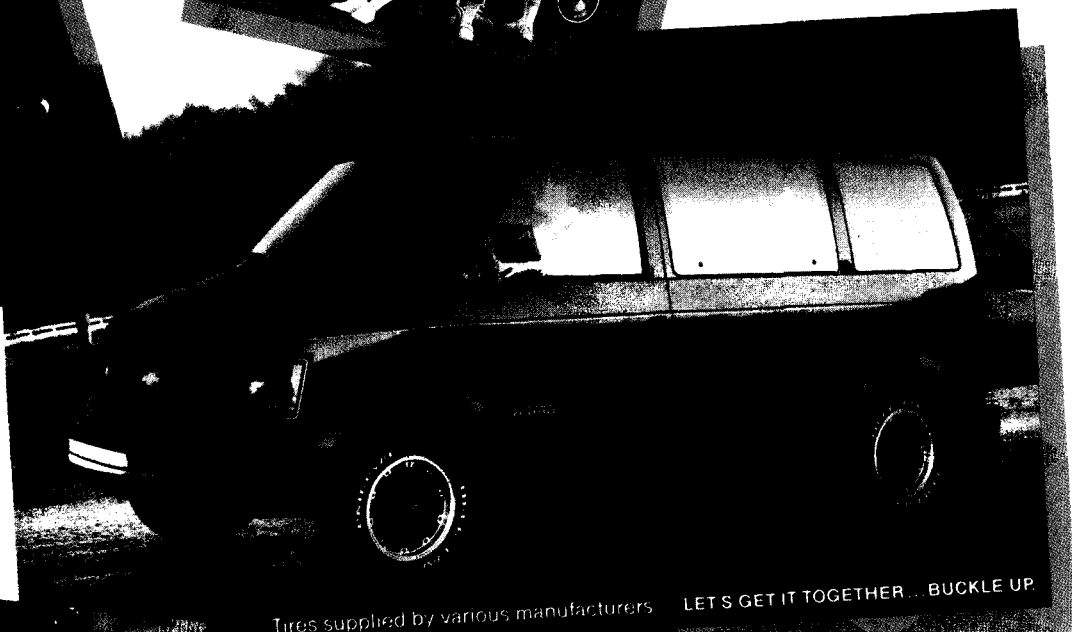


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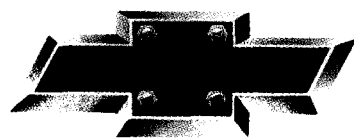


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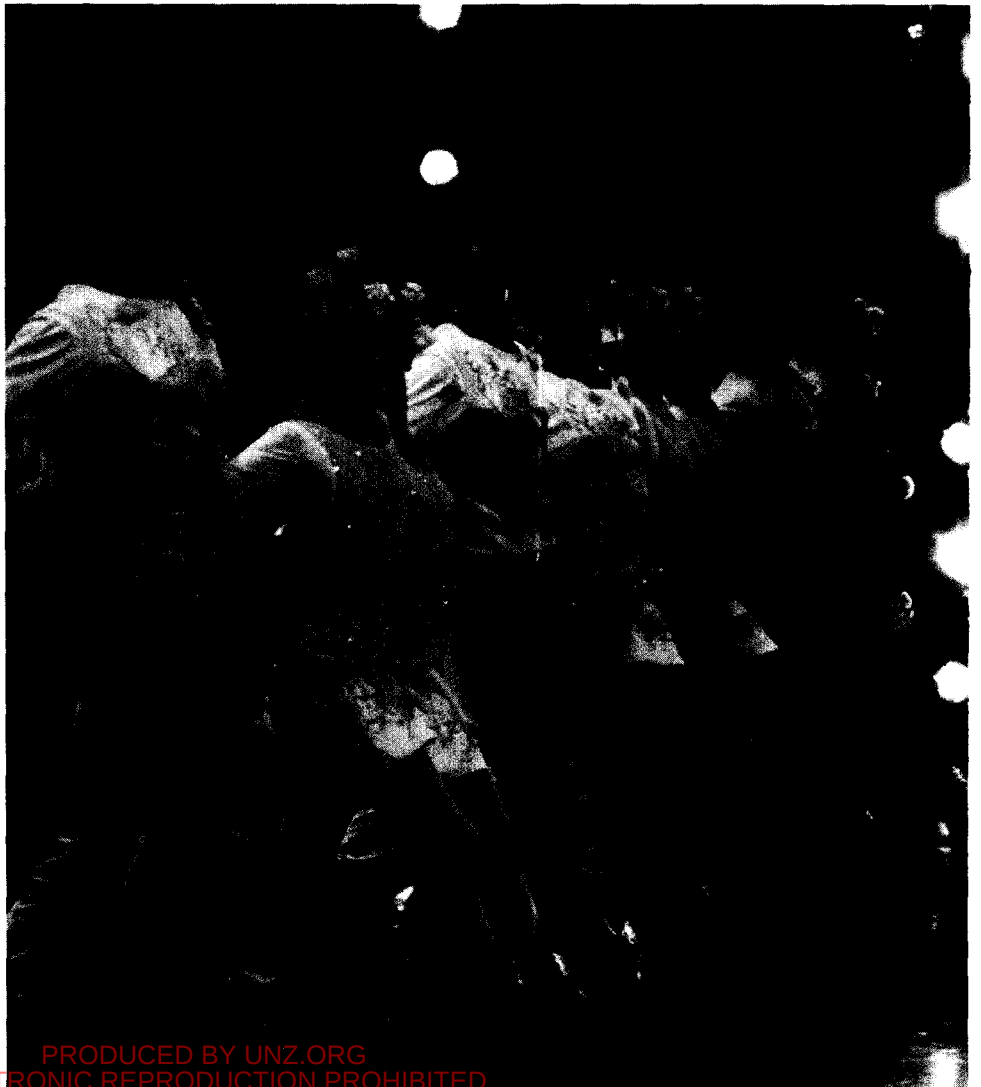
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(Top Left) Mark Goldwater in Gerald Arpino's "Trinity." (Bottom Left) Glenn Edgerton and Dawn Caccamo in John Cranko's "Romeo and Juliet." (Bottom Center) The Company in Gerald Arpino's "Jamboree." (Bottom Right) "Leslie Carothers in Gerald Arpino's "Light Rain." (Top Center) Dawn Caccamo in Gerald Arpino's "Confetti." © Philip Morris Inc. 1986.

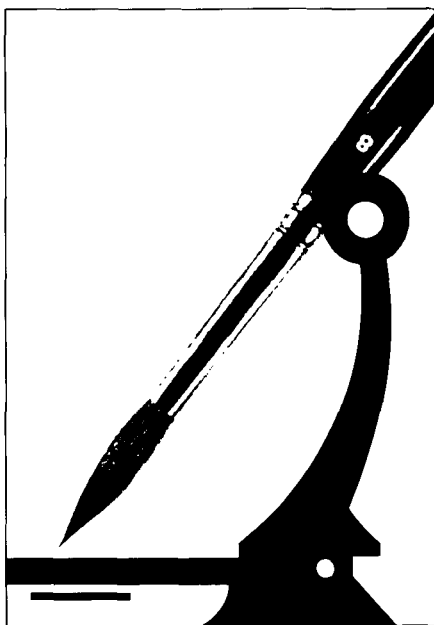
academic interest in the painter himself: only when the apocryphal is excised from the acknowledged body of his work can Rembrandt's special qualities be identified and assessed with any confidence. The preface to Volume I states: "Our attempt to define and purify Rembrandt's oeuvre amounts to an effort to find rational, communicable arguments to support our opinions." In large measure, then, the task of the research project has been to develop criteria for recognizing what is Rembrandt-like—criteria that involve issues not only of quality and style but also of method and technique. Josua Bruyn says, "These are matters in which not everybody is much interested—an unfortunate result, I think, of people being concerned with authenticity and value. But they are a large part of what is new and interesting in what we have to offer."

IMET WITH PROFESSOR Bruyn one day last winter at his office at the Central Research Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science. It was bitterly cold in Amsterdam, and the city was covered by a mottled glaze of ice. The Rijksmuseum's Victorian bulk, normally framed by Bruyn's windows, was barely visible through the morning mist. In one corner of the spacious office, on an easel, sat a black-and-white photograph of a painted eye, many times enlarged—the right eye of the ringleader in Rembrandt's *The Conspiracy of Julius Civilis*, now hanging in Stockholm. (Julius Civilis, who led the Batavians in a revolt against Rome, lost his left eye.) Josua Bruyn himself seemed to epitomize one image of the Old World art historian. He is tall and lean, with silver hair brushed neatly back from his brow. His manner is at once genial, formal, and polite. Recently retired from university life, Bruyn now devotes most of his time to the *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*.

"The uniqueness of the project lies in the intensive and extensive scope of the research," he said. "No scholar—and there had never before been a team—had been given the opportunity to examine all of the paintings attributed to Rembrandt, much less to do so over a limited period of time. We were able to do this, so that a much better comparison became possible. I am not aware of any similar project involving the work of a single artist. To some degree—we had our own variations, of course, our own requirements—we took as a model the methodology of the *Corpus of Flemish*

Primitives, which was an effort begun in the 1950s to catalogue Netherlandish paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These publications discussed the physical aspect of paintings—for the first time describing the pictures not simply as works of art but as *objects*. They included information on the materials used and whenever possible information discovered through x-rays, infrared examination, and so on."

Beginning in the late 1960s, Bruyn said, and continuing for half a decade, the members of the research project traveled in pairs (and in different combinations) to Melbourne, Tokyo, London, New York, Berlin, Los Angeles, Leningrad—anywhere a Rembrandt was reputed to exist. They went to Kenosha,



Wisconsin, to Burghley House in Northamptonshire, to the parish church at Le Mas d'Agenais, in the Garonne. They visited several paintings more than once. Expenses were met through a generous subvention from the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research. To aid in the description of each painting—and to make sure that the same information was collected for every work—the team developed a questionnaire.

Some of the questions were the obvious ones. What was the physical state of the picture? Was it painted on a canvas or a wooden support? Did it have a signature, and was the signature authentic? When and under what conditions was the picture viewed, and by which members of the team? Other questions concerned the ground (an application of

paint to prime the support), the paint layer, the brushwork, the varnish. Still others concerned the scientific evidence. Was an x-ray photograph available or was it possible to have one made? How about ultraviolet or infrared photography? In the case of a painting on a wooden panel, what were the results of a dendrochronological investigation? (Dendrochronology is a method for dating wood by observing the pattern of rings that a specimen displays.) Another family of questions involved the circumstantial evidence. What was known of the painting's provenance? Did this knowledge include any documentary evidence? Do any copies of the painting exist, and when were they painted? Was the picture ever reproduced in an engraving or other print? When and by whom? The team members were asked to describe each painting in minute (some would say laborious) detail—its subject matter, color composition, even mood. Finally, they were asked to render a preliminary opinion.

Working in this down-to-earth manner, the research project compiled dossiers on more than 600 paintings. Then, meeting in Amsterdam once a week, the team began to discuss its findings. One by one the pictures were assigned a letter: *A* for works of unquestioned authenticity, *C* for works by a hand other than Rembrandt's, and *B* for works on which the team was unable to reach a decision. This sorting process is still going on.

"The way we come to a decision varies a great deal," Bruyn said. "There are cases where the two members who actually went to see and describe the picture have come back with very clear-cut ideas. And these have been mostly so convincing that there was hardly any discussion needed. It was rather a matter of how to argue the case in the catalogue, how to present it. In other cases it can be very difficult. It could be that the authors of the description were hesitant themselves and presented all sorts of pros and cons. This is when the process becomes complicated and sometimes very long. Right now, while preparing Volume III, we have to deal with many landscapes, and landscapes turn out to be much more difficult than one might expect. One finds oneself considering picture A, which is absolutely convincing, and picture G, which is not, but in between there are B, C, D, E, and F, and now one has to determine at what stage of the gradation the answer begins to turn negative.

"We try to reach a consensus and almost always do. If you look at Volume I you will see that formal dissents are very, very rare. Everybody, of course, has a sort of preconceived idea of how the great master relates to his pupils and his followers or remote followers or even his falsifiers, and applies these ideas to decisions in individual cases. In the course of the years, however, several of our preconceived ideas have been subject to considerable change. For instance, we long assumed that certain paintings done on panels, which were not by Rembrandt, were imitations from a much later date. When the evidence of dendrochronology showed that this was not always the case—that some of these paintings were remarkably early—then it was obviously time for a reassessment. In other words, if the dendrochronology contradicts you once, it's disturbing, but when it happens three or four times, you start thinking you're mistaken in principle. In this case, pictures that we used to consider remote imitations or fakes we now think were probably done in Rembrandt's workshop itself. We have greatly extended the idea of the workshop. One of the nice things about Volume II is a chapter on guild regulations and workshops in seventeenth-century Holland, especially with regard to paintings. We must not forget that Rembrandt was running a business. His workshop had to produce pictures. And that is what it did. The idea of art as the personal creation of an individual spirit is a fairly modern idea."

ROUGHLY A THIRD of the works considered in Volume I by Bruyn and his colleagues were painted on wood—one of the easiest materials to place in time. The width of the rings added year after year by any tree varies with annual climatic conditions. By considering the overlapping patterns established in pieces of wood whose dates are known and that are from the same general locale (say, northern Europe), it is possible to work backward and construct a "map" of successive tree-ring patterns over many centuries. By matching a specimen of wood to this map, scholars can establish in what year the tree from which the specimen was taken was cut down. They can also tell whether or not panels have been hewn from a single trunk. The fact that the *Bust of an Old Man in a Cap*, in The Hague, about which the research project has reservations, was done on oak from the same tree that pro-

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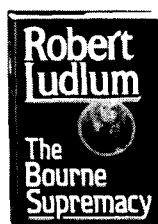
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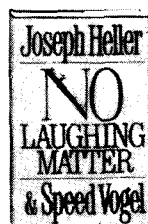
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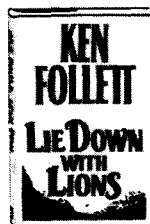
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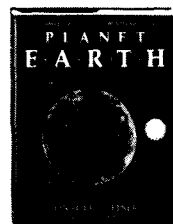
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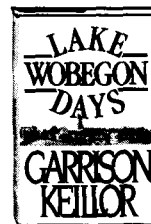
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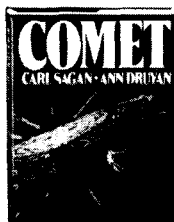
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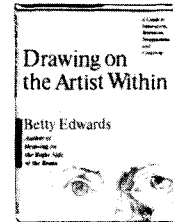
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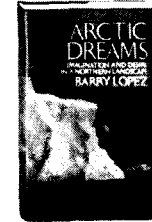
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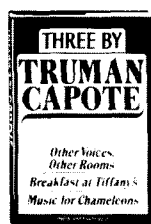
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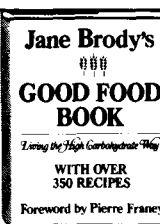
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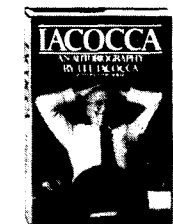
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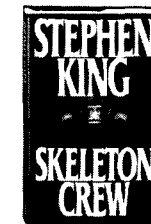
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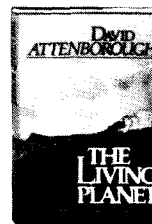
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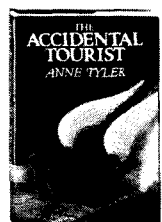
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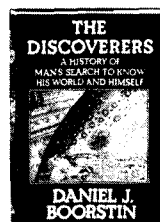
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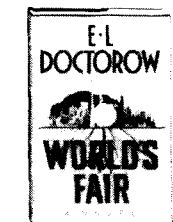
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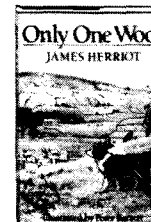
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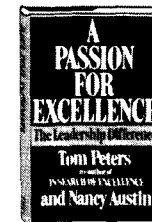
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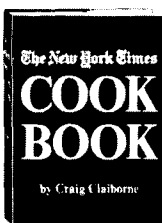
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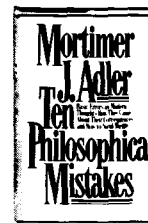
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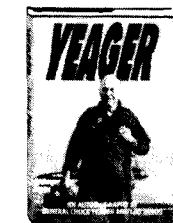
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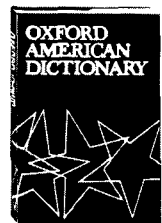
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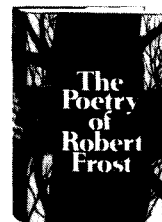
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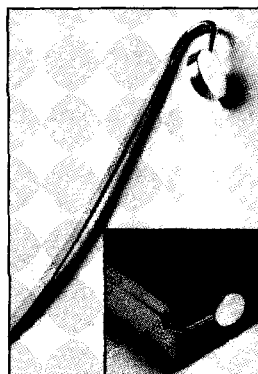


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vided panels for *Simeon in the Temple* and *Minerva in Her Study*, which are accepted as authentic Rembrandts, is one reason why the *Old Man's* status is listed as *B* rather than *C*. Of course, many painters may have ordered from a common supplier; and Rembrandt, who undoubtedly ordered in bulk, was buying for his students as well as himself.

Tree-ring dating is one of many relatively new tools that historians and conservators are employing in their critical analyses of old paintings. Another is microscopy. When focused on the surface of a picture, a microscope aids in the study of brushwork; when focused on a cross section, it furthers an understanding of how the paint layer was built up. Chemical analysis can identify the constituents of the paint, allowing the detection of anachronistic pigment. Ultra-violet photography is sometimes helpful in establishing where paintings have been retouched, and infrared photography may show how the paint was applied. X-ray photographs reveal the presence of particularly dense matter, such as leadwhite, which was used predominantly in the earliest stages of a painting. The revelations of an x-ray examination can be especially useful. Among other things, x-rays frequently expose "pentimenti"—the changes made in a painting's composition. The latest advance is neutron-activation autoradiography, which involves irradiating a painting and then placing photographic film in contact with its surface for differing periods of time. Autoradiography can expose the chemical composition of a picture, allowing glimpses of the picture's evolution.

Joshua Bruyn is quick to point out that whereas scientific evidence rarely may suffice to condemn a painting, it can never, in and of itself, authenticate one. What it can do is expand the base of information that scholars have to work with—and, on occasion, resolve some vexing questions. For example, when x-ray photographs demonstrate the existence of additions or subtractions in the underlying composition of a painting, they are showing changes of mind. For obvious reasons, copies of existing paintings tend to display few pentimenti. Thus x-rays may suggest that a painting—regardless of who it is by—is either an original piece of work conceived of and composed by the artist himself or a copy made from another picture. Largely on the basis of x-ray photographs the team in Amsterdam concluded

ed that *The Artist in Oriental Costume*—despite its "somewhat pedantic execution"—was by Rembrandt rather than a poor copy of some lost original.

The ability to probe the substructure of oil paintings has also made possible a reconstruction of the operating procedure that the young Rembrandt followed. Rarely, it seems, did he work out a design in advance on paper. (Almost no sketches for paintings survive.) Rather, he did his sketching right on the support, in dark paint. The ground, consisting of some combination of chalk, leadwhite, ocher, and quartz, would have been previously applied by a dealer, outside the workshop. On top of the sketch Rembrandt began his underpainting, or "dead-coloring," in a brownish monochrome—probably mixed from leftover paint on his palette. Sometimes the underpainting was highlighted with leadwhite. (Several studies for etchings, such as *Joseph Telling His Dreams*, in the Rijksmuseum, and *Ecce Homo*, in London's National Gallery, provide a good approximation of what the monochrome layer must have looked like.) To judge from the overlapping of various painted areas, Rembrandt worked in planes and in a fixed sequence, starting with the background. He seems to have employed "recipes" for the depiction of materials like fur, gold, and silk. In one picture after another they are handled in the same way. The effect of gold thread or jewelry is invariably suggested by thick ridges of bright paint. To bring a moustache into relief Rembrandt would often sculpt it by lightly scratching the surface with the butt of his brush.

The conclusions advanced by the research project, like those advanced by Rembrandt scholars in decades gone by, ultimately come down to a matter of opinion. They come down, in other words, to connoisseurship: to what the editors of the *Corpus* characterize as "an inner measure of what a painter thinks or feels to be effective, permissible or beautiful." This presupposes a special knowledge born of empathy and a special confidence born of knowledge—a mode of thinking "impossible to describe," Bruyn told me, which compels the scholar to recognize in one painting and not another the hand of Rembrandt. It involves, in effect, the ability to walk in one's own mind on the pathways created by another's. Connoisseurship is a matter, finally, of discernment: of sensing when to discount an alarming piece

of evidence and when to discount a reassuring one.

Despite the uncertainties involved, Bruyn is hopeful that the *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* will withstand both time and scholarly scrutiny. Although the Amsterdam team has accepted as authentic several paintings doubted by others (*Bellona*, in New York, and *An Old Man Asleep*, in Turin, are cases in point), Bruyn believes that few, if any, of the paintings rejected by the research project will enjoy a similar reversal of fortune. Rather, if the project has erred, it is most likely, in his opinion, to have been on the side of generosity. "That our judgments will remain firm one can reasonably expect," he said. "I would never say—I would never pretend—that they should be considered definite. But more or less firm. Of course," he conceded with a tiny smile, "the chances that in some cases we have been *too optimistic* are certainly not negligible."

THE REMBRANDT Research Project has attracted its share of criticism, sometimes for reasons of its own making and sometimes not. There was, to begin with, a rather understandable reverence among many scholars for the body of work that had come to be associated with Rembrandt, and a corresponding reluctance to reopen the files on many pictures that had by the late 1960s acquired an almost mythical Rembrandt-*esque* quality. The research project also encountered some rather fierce scholarly resistance to the very idea of a team approach. To be sure, a team effort was not without precedent. Von Bode and Hofstede de Groot, for example, had collaborated on the eight-volume Rembrandt catalogue. But many art historians were skeptical of the notion that half a dozen specialists, with differing fields of expertise, could rival in coherence and intuitive grasp the achievement of a lone, profoundly erudite connoisseur.

Some critics have voiced methodological concerns—noting, for instance, the highly variable conditions under which the pictures were examined, or the rather lengthy interlude between the viewing of the pictures (in the early 1970s) and the writing of the critical summaries (in the early 1980s). The most commonly voiced fear has been that the research project, in its zeal to rid the Rembrandt oeuvre of impurities, would prove to be overly reductionist. Seymour Slive, a professor of art history at Harvard and a former director of Harvard's Fogg

Museum, worried openly in 1973 that the team might end up "throwing out the baby along with the bath water."

The members of the research project at times provoked anger for behavior that was considered high-handed. For one thing, they tended to be secretive. Although most museums and private collectors cooperated with the Dutch researchers, the team members generally kept their observations to themselves—perhaps a justifiable procedure, given the scope of the undertaking and the preliminary nature of the on-site inspections, but one that did not always sit well with professional colleagues. A visiting delegation from Amsterdam came to be known among curators as "the hit team." In preparing the first volume of its catalogue for publication, the project neglected to give the owners of the pictures involved any notice of its conclusions or its reasoning. Josua Bruyn concedes that this was a needless breach of courtesy. A comment I have heard repeatedly about the members of the team is "Well, they're Dutch."

Despite these early tensions the work of the group seems to have earned a degree of acceptance. Seymour Slive, with whom I spoke one morning at his Cambridge, Massachusetts, home, was still somewhat concerned about the pessimism of the project with regard to certain pictures. "The conception that one senses is perhaps a little too rigid for Rembrandt," he said. "Even Rembrandt had his Monday mornings, and even his pupils had days when they were better than the master." Slive believes that several of the pictures that the project listed in its *B* ("can't decide") section in Volume I—including the artist's self-portrait in Stockholm and portraits at the Maritshuis, in The Hague, and in the Getty Museum, in Los Angeles—should be promoted to *A* ("authentic") status. And he asks, what is the status of *The Good Samaritan*, in London? The picture is signed, and dated 1630, but is not mentioned in Volume I, devoted to the Leiden years. Will it be included in Volume II and assigned a post-Leiden date?

However, on the whole, Slive said, the work of the Rembrandt Research Project ought to be applauded. "You have to remember where we were with regard to Rembrandt's work," he said. "Rembrandt was an unusually productive artist. You must jump forward to Picasso before you find someone comparable. We have almost three hundred etchings—Rembrandt is rightly regard-

ed as the greatest etcher of all time—and about fourteen hundred drawings, and between three hundred and six hundred paintings. The first catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt's etchings was done in 1751, and has been worked over since by ten or twelve scholars. A catalogue of the drawings was not done until two centuries later. It was published in 1954 by Otto Benesch. But until the Rembrandt Research Project, this kind of careful analysis had never been done on all of the paintings—an analysis that included the scientific and technical evidence, iconography, a list of all the known copies, the provenance, the ground, the support, and so on. There had never been a full-dress catalogue raisonné. I think they're too wordy in their descriptions, and I'd like to see more visual evidence, more photographs."

With regard to the previous generations of art historians who assigned a surfeit of pictures to Rembrandt's hand, Slive is inclined to be charitable. "They did the spadework that made the Rembrandt Research Project and a lot of other work possible," he says. "In my view, it's not proper to spit on the head of the man whose shoulders you're standing on." Slive guesses that perhaps half of the paintings from the period 1631–1634 which Bredius attributed to Rembrandt cannot withstand critical scrutiny. Two thirds of that number, he adds, have already been condemned in the court of scholarly opinion.

WHAT HAPPENS TO rejected paintings? To begin with, they are revalued. This may have a devastating effect on private collectors. (To paraphrase Dr. Johnson, there are many people who have but one Rembrandt, and it's a wrong one.) Museums, though, generally manage to take their losses in stride. For one thing, their insurance premiums should decrease. A few of the better seventeenth-century Rembrandtesque paintings have found new, though perhaps temporary, places in the work of the master's most gifted students—"the dustbins into which unaccepted Rembrandts are so often thrown," as Josua Bruyn says. (Bruyn ventures, carefully, that "in considering the expansion of the work of Willem Drost, one shouldn't forget to look at *The Polish Rider*.") Major museums with significant Rembrandt collections have tended to hold on to their non-Rembrandt Rembrandts; these pictures represent an important scholarly resource for understanding the



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master's environment. Many of the very finest paintings remain on display, with appropriate emendations of their nameplates. The popular *Woman Paring Her Nails*, at the Metropolitan in New York, now bears the attribution "Style of Rembrandt." So does *Pilate Washing His Hands*, in the same museum.

A good many pictures, of course, have been removed from the galleries. One day last winter Walter Liedtke, the curator of Dutch and Flemish paintings at the Metropolitan, showed me into a large storeroom on the second floor where much of the museum's collection of European paintings resides unseen. The paintings hang on floor-to-ceiling racks that can be rolled out for viewing. A row of forty racks, each holding as many as ten paintings, lies on either side of a wide walkway—Italian, Spanish, and French pictures on the left, English, Dutch, and Flemish on the right. Two of the racks hold nothing but what Liedtke calls "our not-Rembrandts."

He rolled them out. It was oddly moving to watch the paintings slide into view, like seeing bodies pulled from drawers in a morgue—unclaimed, unidentified, yet somehow familiar. Here were *The Admiral and His Wife* (a pair of companion paintings), a painting titled *Portrait of a Woman in a Yellow Dress*, *A Sybil*, the *Head of Christ* that I remembered, and more than a dozen other pictures, including two that once passed as portraits of Rembrandt's wife, Saskia, and his son, Titus.

"Most of these," Liedtke said, embarking on a short tour of this potter's field, "were acquired by the Metropolitan before the Second World War—all but two, actually. The portraits of the admiral and his wife have been assigned to Ferdinand Bol, but I don't think that's likely. They could be English, from around 1720. The *Sybil* has been assigned to Willem Drost. I think that's right. I think it's Drost. The portrait of Saskia is an imitation. Look at the signature. It's lying in a pool of old paint. The artist kept doing it over to get it right. The portrait of Titus is an imitation too—probably nineteenth-century. See how flat the picture is? The 1800s produced a lot of Rembrandts, but the imitators didn't have the same way of seeing things as the seventeenth-century painters. Even a minor painter in the seventeenth century had to produce something like a replica of the real world. A figure had to have solid form, and there had to be depth in the space around it.

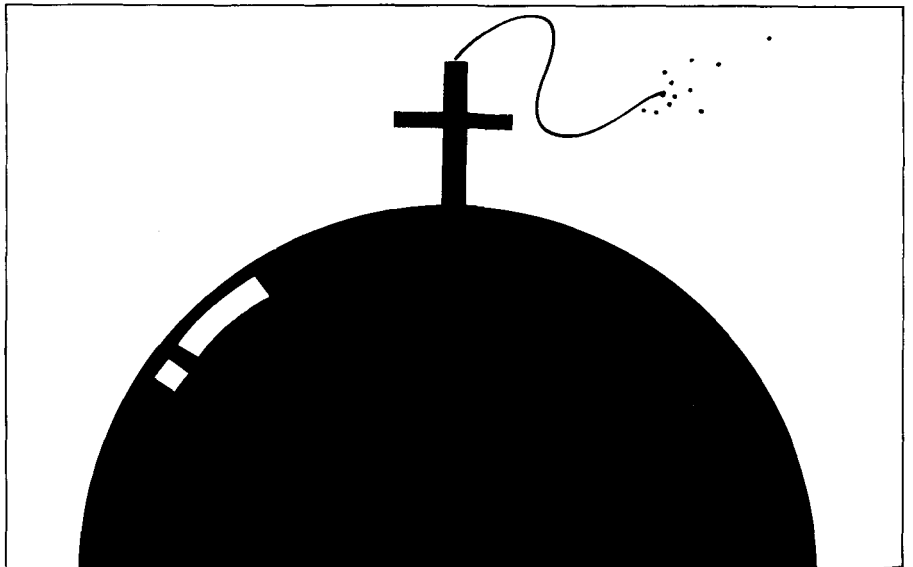
In the nineteenth century that concept of painting was relaxed. A picture came to be seen as a decorated surface. It was meant to be an *analogy* to reality, not a replica. As a result, even when they were copying, the nineteenth-century painters rarely got Rembrandt right."

Why, I asked Liedtke, if their authenticity was in dispute, were two paintings still hanging in the Met over the name Rembrandt? "Well," he said, "there are too many 'Rembrandts' hanging on the walls of a lot of museums. It's a delicate problem. Some of the paintings are gifts, and they've been given on the condition that they hang. For all we know, some of the pictures, including ours, may actually be Rembrandts. We don't move more quickly because it's embarrassing to say 'This isn't by Rembrandt'

and then a few years later have to announce, 'Oh, well, it really is.' Also, with some paintings, which are perhaps not by Rembrandt, there is a certain obligation to preserve the attribution until you can say who they're by. This is the case, I think, with *The Polish Rider*. And finally, why take down a picture that you thought was good enough to hang in the first place? The picture hasn't changed."

I was pleased to discover that museum curators think this way. Next year a major exhibition of Rembrandt paintings will be mounted in the United States. It will consist of ten pictures each from the Metropolitan, the Rijksmuseum, and the Staatliche Museen. And *The Man With the Golden Helmet*, whoever it's by, will be among them.

—Cullen Murphy



ULSTER THE MARCHING SEASON

*Whether Northern Ireland's Protestants
will accept the recent Anglo-Irish
Agreement will become apparent
in the next few months*

LAST NOVEMBER the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, and her Irish counterpart, Garret FitzGerald, met at Hillsborough Castle, in Northern Ireland, to conclude the business they had embarked on eighteen months earlier—namely, crafting some sort of bilateral arrangements that would

reduce the level of alienation among Catholics in Northern Ireland, undermine support for Sinn Féin (the political arm of the Irish Republican Army), and put constitutional politics back on track in Ulster. Over the protests of Protestant Unionists—diehard supporters of the union of Northern Ireland and Great Britain in its present form—FitzGerald and Thatcher affixed their signatures to an "Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom" that effectively gives Dublin a say in Northern Ireland's internal affairs. Within a week the Hillsborough Agreement was ratified by the Irish Parliament in Dublin. Within another week the British Parliament at Westminster overwhelmingly followed suit. Protestants in Northern Ireland, however, have vowed to undermine the treaty—by whatever means they can.

The Hillsborough Agreement is succinct, its brevity almost concealing the craftsmanship that went into its wording. First, both governments affirmed that any change in the status of Northern Ireland (for example, incorporation by the Republic of Ireland) would come about only with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. Both governments recognized that at present the Protestant (mainly Unionist) majority wished for no change in its status. And both governments promised to introduce and support in their respective Parliaments legislation to secure a united Ireland if in the future a majority of the people in Northern Ireland were clearly to wish for and formally to consent to the establishment of a united Ireland.

Second, the two governments agreed to set up an Intergovernmental Conference that would be jointly chaired by the British secretary of state for Northern Ireland, currently Tom King, and a "Permanent Irish Ministerial Representative"—at present the minister for foreign affairs, Peter Barry. The functions of the conference would pertain both to Northern Ireland and to relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, specifically with regard to political matters, security arrangements, the administration of justice, and the promotion of cross-border cooperation. A provision specifying that "determined efforts shall be made through the Conference to resolve any differences"—a binding legal obligation with precedent in international law—ensures that the Irish government's role is more than merely consultative (even though less than fully executive).

Third, both London and Dublin supported the idea of a "devolved" government, to deal with a range of matters within Northern Ireland, that would command "widespread acceptance throughout the community." Since 1972, when Britain abolished the Northern Ireland government amid renewed sectarian strife, the six counties have been ruled directly from London; "devolution" refers to the re-establishment of a provincial governing authority. Should this occur, Dublin would nevertheless retain a say in certain areas affecting the interests of the Catholic minority (such as security arrangements and human rights). If devolution does not come to pass, then Dublin will continue to have a say in *all* matters that affect Catholics.

Whether or not the Hillsborough

Agreement works, there can be no doubt of its historic significance. For the first time since 1920, when the partition of Ireland occurred, the British government explicitly recognizes that the Republic of Ireland has at least a limited role to play in the governance of Northern Ireland. This constitutes an implicit acknowledgment that the partition of Ireland has been, in political and social terms, a failure. For its part, the Irish government explicitly accepts the fact that Northern Ireland will remain within the United Kingdom as long as that is the wish of a majority of the people there. This amounts to an implicit acknowledgment that unification is an aspiration, not an inevitability. Hillsborough therefore represents a quid pro quo of sorts. In exchange for the Irish government's recognition that a majority of the people of Northern Ireland have the right to say no to a united Ireland, the British government was prepared to give the Irish government some influence in Northern Ireland in areas relating to the aspirations, interests, and identity of the Catholic minority. It was prepared to accept, in other words, what has come to be called an Irish Dimension (meaning, at the very least, an institutional link between Belfast and Dublin) in Ulster's future.

ULTIMATELY, OF COURSE, the Hillsborough Agreement will be judged on the extent to which it achieves its avowed aims—that is, the extent to which it promotes peace and stability in Northern Ireland (where some 16,000 British troops are now stationed, and where political violence has claimed more than 2,500 lives during the past decade and a half) and helps to reconcile the Protestant and Catholic communities (with their divergent but legitimate interests and traditions). The notion that these aims can be achieved, however, was the product of explicit and implicit assumptions on the part of both Dublin and London—assumptions that are, perhaps, not entirely tenable.

The explicit assumption was that if the alienation in the Catholic community in Northern Ireland—the result most immediately of the British government's security policies and its administration of the judicial system—went beyond a certain point, the adverse consequences for constitutional politics on the island as a whole would be not only serious but potentially irreversible. Garret FitzGerald made this point to Margaret Thatcher



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er when they met at Chequers, the British Prime Minister's country residence, in November of 1983. The meeting came a few months after the ultra-nationalist Sinn Fein party, which advocates the unification of Ireland by force, if necessary, secured 43 percent of the Catholic vote in Northern Ireland in the British general elections. (Northern Ireland is represented at Westminster by seventeen members of Parliament.) The implicit assumption was that even if there were initial widespread opposition in the Protestant community to whatever agreement the two governments came to, it would subside when the benefits of such an agreement, in the form of a lower level of violence and the formal international guarantee of the Unionists' constitutional position, became apparent to a majority of Protestants.

In sum, according to the logic that prevailed, the *existing* level of alienation in the Catholic community was such as to require new political arrangements in the short run to alleviate it, whereas the *possible* level of alienation in the Protestant community was thought to be containable in the long run.

The problem here, of course, is with the nature of the alienation itself. In Northern Ireland it takes many forms. Most obvious is the alienation between Catholics and Protestants—a conflict whose roots lie in England's deliberate introduction of Protestant colonists to Ireland's northeastern counties during the early seventeenth century. (The "plantation" took place because Ulster was the most rebellious of Ireland's provinces; ironically, thanks to the plantation, it still is.) However, within the Catholic community itself there is alienation between supporters of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (the moderate voice of constitutional nationalism) and supporters of Sinn Fein (the extremist voice of *unconstitutional* nationalism). Similarly, within the Protestant community there are divisions—patched over, if only temporarily, since Hillsborough—between supporters of the Official Unionist Party (who want above all else to maintain the union with Britain) and supporters of the Democratic Unionist Party (who want above all else not to become part of an all-Ireland state). In addition, both Catholics and Protestants, albeit to somewhat differing degrees, are alienated from the institutions of government. And both communities, albeit again to somewhat differing degrees, are alienated from their respec-

tive mentor states: the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

Unfortunately, even if new political arrangements successfully address Catholic concerns and even if support for Sinn Fein begins to diminish, this is no guarantee of peace, stability, or a reduced level of alienation between Catholics and Protestants. On the contrary, it is quite possible that reforms will have an effect opposite the one intended. Reforms in the judiciary, in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (Northern Ireland's police force, which is now almost exclusively Protestant), and in the Ulster Defence Regiment (a British Army unit recruited exclusively in Northern Ireland and which is also almost exclusively Protestant) may indeed wean Nationalist votes away from Sinn Fein, but there is no reason to believe that this will result in a decrease in the activities of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), whose campaign of violence to end the British presence in Ireland is now in its seventeenth year. Already Northern Protestants see themselves as the victims of a calculatedly cold-blooded campaign of genocide conducted by the IRA. If the IRA is able to maintain its campaign of violence at the current level, the very real possibility is that each new killing of a member of the Constabulary or the Defence Regiment will strengthen the conviction of the Protestants that reforms only facilitate and encourage the IRA death machine.

If the number of Defence Regiment and Constabulary personnel who are killed does not fall, then the resulting alienation of the Protestants could paralyze the functioning of the Intergovernmental Conference. For on the one hand, the conference would be faced with the imperative of moving slowly in the area of reform in order to placate the Protestants, while on the other hand, it would continue to be faced with the imperative of moving quickly in order to shore up whatever support it had won in the Catholic community. These dual imperatives—the simultaneous needs to pull back and push forward—would lead to stalemate and inevitable breakdown.

The IRA's potential role as spoiler is the crucial difference between the Protestant campaign in 1974 to bring down the Sunningdale Agreement—an experiment in Protestant-Catholic power-sharing that fell apart in six months—and the current campaign to wreck the Hillsborough Agreement. In 1974 the

IRA by and large kept a low profile; Unionist agitation, especially the province-wide strike backed by Protestant paramilitary organizations, was primarily responsible for bringing down Sunningdale. (The paramilitary organizations have since the early 1970s been chiefly responsible for the sectarian murder of Catholics.) Today, however, the IRA is not counting on the Protestants alone to destroy the Hillsborough Agreement. In fact, the more successful the IRA is in showing that it can strike at will (which it did in Armagh at precisely one minute past midnight on New Year's Day), the more it will encourage Protestant Unionists to make Northern Ireland ungovernable—which is to say, the more it will encourage Protestants to do the work of the IRA. It is a pathetic irony of the conflict: Protestants vowing to make Northern Ireland ungovernable in order to maintain the union with Great Britain, the IRA vowing to make Northern Ireland ungovernable in order to break the union with Great Britain.

A SECOND FACTOR that will determine the fate of the Hillsborough Agreement is the final form of the Unionist response. To date the response has been predictable. The two most basic fears of the Protestants—that they will somehow be outmaneuvered by the Irish Republic and that they will be betrayed by the British—are reinforced by the perception that the Hillsborough Agreement was forged behind their backs. Many Protestants believe that Northern Ireland's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which speaks for moderate Catholics who desire affiliation with the Republic of Ireland, not only was kept informed of the proceedings but also had a veto over the final terms of the agreement. And, they believe, the party has a veto with regard to the nature of a devolved government.

Insecurity and the fear it breeds are, of course, permanent parts of the local Protestant mentality. The Protestant colonizations of northeastern Ireland in the early seventeenth century were partial. At all times the new settlers lived in scattered enclaves and under precarious circumstances. Surrounded by a dispossessed and hostile native Catholic population, they were always vulnerable to attack. Initially the Protestants feared being overrun and massacred by the Catholic majority. Then came the fear of what would happen if the Act of Union of 1801 were ever repealed. Later it was



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RUMS OF PUERTO RICO

the fear of Home Rule—that is, rule from Dublin, though in the context of London's sovereignty, of a semi-autonomous but predominantly Catholic all-Ireland political entity. Finally, ever since independence was achieved by twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties, in 1921, the Unionists have feared being abandoned by the British—or sold out by their own.

Indeed, Protestant fears are ubiquitous. They encapsulate the entire Protestant experience in Ulster. Deeply rooted, pervasive, impervious to the passage of time, they seem almost genetically encoded—even necessary for the survival of the species. In moments of crisis, therefore, when the future threatens, Protestants resort to the strategies of the past. Thus Ulster must “fight” to maintain its position in the Union, as it was prepared to do in 1912 and again in 1974. In each instance, the Protestants believe, only the threat of rebellion stayed Britain's hand. And thus in 1986 the Unionists raise once more the threat of rebellion—no matter that their constitutional position within the United Kingdom is now guaranteed by formal international treaty.

In the Unionist perspective, the one element of the Hillsborough Agreement that counts is the Intergovernmental Conference. The conference has a permanent secretariat, based in Belfast, comprising both Irish and British civil servants. It confirms the Unionists' worst fear: the South inching its way in. The conference, therefore, is viewed not as a small cooperative gesture but as a coalition government in embryo. In the Unionists' view, the language in the agreement requiring “determined efforts . . . to resolve differences” means that Dublin will get its way 50 percent of the time. The conference is seen, therefore, as the first step toward an all-Ireland state. *Reconciliation* is simply a code word for *unification*.

To appreciate the range of possible Unionist responses to Hillsborough one must keep several things in mind. First, history suggests that the Unionists may not seem to act in their own best interests. The intensity of their fear that any association with the South will lead to the ineluctable absorption of the Protestant people of Ulster into an all-Ireland state is a powerful stimulus to irrational behavior. The Unionists' decision last December to resign the fifteen seats they held in the Westminster Parliament and to recontest them did not have the

consequences they had predicted. In special elections held last January, which the Unionists insisted on calling a referendum on the agreement, they lost one seat to the Social Democratic and Labour Party (which, significantly, outpolled Sinn Féin in the constituencies that both parties contested) and failed to get the mandate they had sought.

Another thing to bear in mind is that in the past the Unionists' threats of irrational action—fighting Britain to remain part of Britain—proved successful. The threat of irrational action is a perfectly rational tactic when it achieves its purpose. The purpose in the present circumstances is to bring down the Hillsborough Agreement. It is, therefore, of little consequence to Protestants at the moment if their actions to achieve this end also weaken their union with Great Britain. They have a simple objective, not a grand strategic design. The latter, they believe, will somehow emerge once the former is achieved.

THE TIME FRAME for action will last through July and August—“the marching season,” when, Unionists traditionally believe, they can save their souls with bunting. Various scenarios are possible. The present pervasive Unionist opposition to the Hillsborough Agreement conceals but does not eliminate the basic divisions in unionism. Moreover, the Protestant will as opposed to the Protestant threat to fight has never actually been tested.

To begin with, the Unionists could go back to Westminster and present the “verdict” of the Ulster people to the British government. They might then put forward alternative proposals, which would be unacceptable to the government if the Protestants set out as preconditions for discussion—as they almost certainly would—the dismantling of the Intergovernmental Conference. Moreover, any roundtable conference would have to include the government of the Irish Republic, because under the terms of the treaty there are no circumstances under which the Hillsborough Agreement can simply be abandoned without discussion. In short, the Protestants cannot both dictate the agenda and limit the participants.

At this point they have five options. First, they can engage in unconstitutional but nonviolent actions, which for the moment would allow them to hold the high ground relative to the Protestant paramilitary organizations. (A one-day

general strike last March, called for by both Unionist parties, brought the province to a virtual standstill. However, the widespread street violence and intimidation that accompanied the strike led James Molyneux, the leader of the Official Unionist Party, to promise that his party would not participate in any future strike actions. This was the first crack in what had been up to that point a unified Unionist front, because Ian Paisley, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, would make no such promise.) Second, they can withdraw from government—from Westminster, the Northern Ireland Assembly, regional bodies such as health and education boards, and local councils—or they can take nonviolent action to disrupt the institutions of government. Third, they can threaten a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). Fourth, they can actually make a UDI and set up a provisional government of their own. Fifth, they can negotiate for a devolved government within the context of the Hillsborough Agreement.

The logic of withdrawal is impeccably simple. If, the Protestants argue, half a million Catholics effectively withdrew their consent from the forms of government offered them, and if the consequence of this was the instability and violence that led eventually to the Hillsborough Agreement, then should not the consequence of one million Protestants' effectively withdrawing their consent be substantially more instability and violence, thus requiring a renegotiation of the Hillsborough Agreement? Already Ulster Clubs are springing up across Northern Ireland to organize withdrawal of consent if the politicians fail to do so.

However, if the constitutional parties of unionism withdraw from government, they will be either wittingly or unwittingly conceding the ground to the Protestant paramilitary organizations, and this will lead to an increasing number of sectarian murders on both sides of the religious and political divide. Moreover, in the event that Protestant paramilitarists mount a bombing campaign in the Republic, the impact on public opinion there might suggest that the Republic's commitment to the Hillsborough Agreement is inversely related to its having to bear any of the consequences.

The third option—the threat of a UDI—is a rational action. Unionists believe that the pressure on the British

The American Character

Alexis de Tocqueville was a member of the French aristocracy who wrote with a pen that was sharp and a judgment that was penetrating.

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Alexis de Tocqueville was both a political philosopher and a practical politician. He loved liberty, and so he had faith in the people. And it is of the people that he wrote.

He wrote with admiration about the political and social system the American people were developing. He found some shortcomings, along with many virtues. And he predicted democracy's survival and success.

More than a quarter century before Tocqueville visited America, another Frenchman traveled to the new world and wrote about the people there. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur was less well known in his day than Tocqueville was, and is less remembered in ours. But he, too, had an original perception

and insight into the American character.

He found that in America "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."

Americans, he continued, act upon new principles and "must therefore entertain new ideas and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labor," Americans have "passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample substance. This is an American."

When these words were written, the American people still were feeling close to their own revolution. In a revolution, as in a novel, the difficult part is to write the end. Two hundred years have passed, and the American revolution has not ended. The American journey continues. We still are a people filled with the spirit of independence.

The American character continues to combine idealism with practical realism, compassion with hardheadedness when it comes to solving problems. Americans are proud and loud, daring and caring. They extol individuality but always pitch in when it comes to helping others.

But, the reader may ask, haven't you forgotten industrious, hospitable, brash, confident, outspoken, and resourceful? No, we haven't forgotten. We've just taken them for granted.



government at this point would be sufficient to make the Intergovernmental Conference incapable of achieving its stated purposes, that the threat of a UDI to Britain's national and strategic interests would outweigh whatever advantages Britain might achieve from strict adherence to the agreement, and that Mrs. Thatcher, sufficiently distracted by problems at home, would simply lose interest in making the agreement work.

Ironically, if the Unionists pursue this campaign of resistance, their solidarity and commitment will prove the more determined in the face of a successful IRA military campaign. In this sense, both protagonists need to feed upon each other if they are to bring down the Hillsborough Agreement. It is likely that the past will repeat itself in new forms: the Unionists will split into those who will continue to support constitutional means to bring about change and those who will not. In other words, there will appear a Sinn Fein on the Unionist side to match the existing Sinn Fein on the Nationalist side.

An actual UDI—the fourth option—would, of course, be irrational, since there are no circumstances under which it could succeed. The British government would have to put it down, and the Unionists would add one more enemy—the British—to their list. But the possibility of a UDI should not be dismissed simply because it is irrational. To the Unionists, the actions that will destroy the agreement are what matters, not the further consequences of those actions once the agreement is destroyed.

The ultimate question, then, is rather simple: Would the Unionists prefer to have nothing at all, a wasteland of an Ulster, an intractable war of sectarianism, a loss of identity, and an end to their Britishness, if they can't have things their own way? Would they prefer this, even if a fifth option—a weak power-sharing arrangement and a stripped-down Intergovernmental Conference—were potentially available through negotiation?

The fact is that any arrangement that the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party and either of the Unionist parties would be prepared to enter into would be construed by the governments in both Dublin and London as having widespread community acceptance. The SDLP can now afford to be generous in defining what is acceptable regarding the form that an autonomous provincial government should take. For if the Unionists were to abuse the devo-

lution system agreed to, especially one that was not structured along traditional power-sharing lines, the SDLP could simply withdraw, in which case the functions that had been devolved would once again come under the aegis of the Intergovernmental Conference. Thus the incentive to Unionists: adhere to the principles of devolution agreed to and the powers of the conference are thereby diminished; reject them or abuse them and the powers of the conference remain strong.

Unfortunately, this way of thinking is entirely rational and must compete with the idea that going over the brink a little doesn't mean going all the way. One way or another, by summer's end the Protestants will have made a decision.

—Padraig O'Malley



WASHINGTON

HOW MANY ARE HUNGRY?

Attention to droughts and other food crises can obscure facts about the extent and location of malnutrition

THERE IS NO question that serious malnutrition exists in the world today. The plight of Ethiopia in particular has recently captured the world's attention. With presidential commissions and United Nations agencies issuing reports on malnutrition, it might reasonably be assumed that there exists some body of solid information from which re-

searchers have drawn unambiguous and verifiable conclusions. The conventional wisdom concerning the present "food crisis," however, consists to a distressing degree of misconceptions. In the age of the problem-solving state, misconceptions about the hunger problem can pose dangers to vulnerable groups. They increase the risk that relief and development policies will be based on faulty premises. Programs that fail increase the reluctance of wealthy nations to commit further resources to alleviating malnutrition.

The first misconception is that *researchers have a precise idea of the scope of the problem*. Most analyses of the current world food situation are built on the assumption that the available data on agricultural and nutritional conditions are accurate. It is not unusual for agricultural analysts to use these data in highly exacting calculations—as if it were possible to trace changes in the production and availability of food in all areas of the world with a fair degree of precision. Unfortunately, such confidence is unwarranted.

Consider some of the recent data produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization. The FAO reports that Chad's per capita food supply rose by exactly six calories a day from 1977 to 1980 and that per capita food supplies in Afghanistan and Chad differed by exactly seven calories a day (or 0.4 percent) in 1980. For the periods in question it is also estimated that upwards of 80 percent of the populations of both nations were rural and illiterate, and that as much as half of the production of goods and services in both countries may have occurred outside the monetary economy. Even these estimates are only speculation, because a comprehensive economic survey has never been attempted in either nation. In fact, at the time the FAO published its estimates, neither country had ever conducted a complete national census. To make matters worse, both nations were in the throes of chaos in 1980—Afghanistan overrun by Soviet troops, Chad convulsed by civil war. No authority in the world, no matter what its mandate, could hope to measure a change in national diet amounting to scarcely more than a pound of grain per person per year.

The tendency to dignify assumptions about the global food or nutrition situation with undeserved decimals extends far beyond the borders of Chad and Afghanistan.

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6.

The FAO produces an annual estimate of world food-grain production which gives global grain output down to the last thousand tons—implying that variations in the world harvest can be tracked with an accuracy of 0.0001 percent. The seeming specificity of these estimates is in contrast with the 15-million-ton discrepancy between FAO and United States Department of Agriculture estimates of the volume of food grains that developed countries export. And food trade between developed nations is one of the links in the world food system which is easiest to observe and measure.

Estimates concerning the global nutrition situation are plagued by the same sorts of false precision. FAO numbers, for example, suggest that some 54 million more people were malnourished in non-Communist developing countries in 1972–1974 than in 1969–1971. Such estimates implicitly suggest that the number of undernourished people in the Third World can be estimated confidently to the last million. The FAO presumes a margin of error in its estimates, in other words, of less than 0.2 percent. In contrast, the United States Bureau of the Census estimates that it missed more than six million people in its 1970 count of the American population—that is, almost three percent of the U.S. total.

How great is the real margin of error in the statistics on malnutrition? Are there more undernourished people in the world than we think or are there fewer? The data provided by the FAO simply do not permit reliable answers. For one thing, nutritional adequacy is an extremely slippery concept: what is adequate for one person is inadequate for another. Inevitably, too, the poor generate less statistical information about their lives and needs than do more-affluent groups. Governments find it extremely difficult to learn about citizens who are socially invisible, geographically remote, or politically mute. In the United States, which possesses the most sophisticated and effective enumerative apparatus in the world, the continuing debate about how many Americans go hungry reflects not only political passions but also the difficulty of identifying and quantifying nutritional need. Most developing countries a generation after independence possess only a limited ability to collect and process even the most basic demographic or agricultural data.

ANOTHER MISCONCEPTION is that *malnutrition is worse today than it was in recent decades*. Thanks to television, our ability to perceive hunger has increased dramatically. Has the extent of hunger also increased? It is possible to talk with some confidence about trends in the prevalence of serious undernourishment, for there is an accurate and widely available indicator of severe physical distress within national populations. It is the death rate. For some poor nations (particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa) current mortality levels are still uncertain; in others, mortality can be ascertained only retrospectively. But even with these limitations mortality rates are a useful indicator of living conditions in developing countries.

Since the end of the Second World War death rates for almost all surveyed populations in developing regions have fallen markedly. Indeed, the precipitous mortality decline in developing nations is acknowledged in the term “population explosion”: falling death rates, not rising birth rates, have been the main cause of the acceleration of population growth in poor nations. In general, improvements in life expectancy have been broad-based and substantial, with regional increases of longevity averaging close to a decade during the period between the early 1950s and the late 1970s.

The principal factor depressing life expectancy in developing countries has always been the high death rate for infants and children. World Bank studies suggest that as much as two thirds of the difference in life-spans between people in developed countries and those in developing ones can be traced to differences in survival rates for children under five. It is here where the most improvement has come. According to UN estimates, significant regional drops in infant mortality—ranging from 25 percent to 60 percent and centering near 40 percent—appear to have taken place between the late 1950s and the late 1970s in northern Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Although sub-Saharan Africa’s mortality trends cannot be quantified with confidence, there is reason to believe that life expectancy has risen and infant mortality has declined in that region, as well. There is little doubt that population growth has accelerated in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1950s; in fact, sub-Saharan Africa is widely thought to have the highest rate of population growth of any major region in the world. Only a small portion of that accel-

eration is likely to have been caused by increases in fertility (and increases in fertility, insofar as they have occurred, may also imply improvements in health and nutrition).

Mortality, of course, is not a perfect measure of nutritional change. Improved nutrition is only one of a number of forces that have been pushing down death rates in developing countries. Others include the upgrading of hygiene and sanitation; the extension of public health services; medical innovations; improvements in education, communications, transportation, and, in some areas, civil order. Even so, the extent to which improvements in nutrition—both direct and indirect—have reduced mortality in developing countries has frequently been underestimated. For example, Sri Lanka experienced an abrupt jump in life expectancy shortly after the Second World War. Whereas this was long described as a “technical fix”—a triumph of DDT over the anopheles mosquito—years later researchers realized that abrupt and rapid drops in mortality had also taken place in Sri Lanka’s highlands, or “dry zones,” where malaria had never been a serious problem. In both highland and lowland regions health improved in tandem with access to food.

If high and unstable death rates can be taken as evidence of a high risk of life-threatening malnutrition, then it would appear that worsening hunger is an exception peculiar to a very few developing countries, not the rule.

ATHIRD MISCONCEPTION is that *developing countries suffer because the world food system is becoming increasingly unstable*. In recent years a number of influential reports, including a major econometric study by the International Food Policy Research Institute, have argued that variability in world cereal production, measured in terms of annual deviations from average, has been increasing since the 1960s. The implication has been that instability in the food system has threatened the health of populations in many developing regions.

Stability in the food system, however, is measured not by changes in harvests but by changes in access to food. Purchasing power is the decisive factor. Over the long run nutritional purchasing power is determined by changes in income and in the price of foodstuffs.

For all the uncertainties inherent in statistics pertaining to changes in real income, or to changes in inflation-adjust-



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ed food prices, it is possible to speak of global trends for both. In the postwar period the *general* trend among nations (though possibly not for low-income sub-Saharan Africa) has been toward increasing aggregate real per capita incomes; over the same period the *general* trend in international markets has been toward decreasing inflation-adjusted food prices. These trends suggest that from the standpoint of consumers, the stability of the world food system has generally been increasing over the postwar period. This is true even for the population of one of the world's largest and poorest nations: in India per capita income is estimated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to have increased by more than half between the early 1950s and the early 1980s; over the same period the real price of wheat in the international market fell by more than 40 percent, that of rice by more than 30 percent, and that of corn by more than 50 percent. Whereas some methods of calculation and choices of dates would yield different specific figures, the conclusion would still be the same: nutritional security has increased in India during recent decades.

A perception that the global food system has been deteriorating seems to have been encouraged by some recent changes in the structure of world food markets. It is true that the net import of food grains by less-developed countries has increased dramatically in recent decades. The World Bank estimates that net food-grain imports by developing countries have risen from an average of about 20 million tons in the early 1960s to an average of about 80 million tons in the early 1980s. But the growing use of international markets to meet local food needs in low-income countries simply makes economic sense—especially in the more affluent developing countries, which account for the great bulk of food-grain imports. At the same time that the price of internationally traded food grains has declined, the purchasing power of the developing world has increased substantially. Over the past quarter century per capita income in these diverse nations may have doubled, on average. Today developing countries can pay for their total food-grain imports with only about four percent of their total export earnings. Their grain-import expenditures have decreased in relation to their export revenues—and this fact indicates decreasing vulnerability to shocks.

FINALLY, IT IS a misconception that in *sub-Saharan Africa the causes of malnutrition are primarily environmental*. The effects of the drought that has afflicted large regions of Africa in recent years must not, of course, be ignored. In some areas increased cultivation or overgrazing probably contributed to the disruption of a natural balance that had previously preserved productive capacity, even during periods of adverse weather.

But not all sub-Saharan countries have experienced economic or agricultural decline during the 1970s and early 1980s. Indeed, the differences in performance during these years between some sub-Saharan countries with comparable climates and resources were dramatic. U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics state, for example, that food output during the 1970s grew by 84 percent in the Ivory Coast, by 42 percent in Kenya, and by 31 percent in Malawi. In contrast, food output was virtually static in Uganda and actually fell by seven percent in Ghana and nine percent in Mozambique. While these figures should be understood to be merely illustrative, owing to the limits of the data on African agriculture, they do serve to underscore a number of points about recent developments in sub-Saharan Africa. First, not all of the countries that apparently experienced the most severe agricultural setbacks were in the Sahel, the region where agriculture is said to have been most severely affected by the changes in weather. Second, some of the nations with the worst agricultural records are contiguous to nations with some of the best records: Uganda borders Kenya, Mozambique borders Malawi, and Ghana borders the Ivory Coast. Third, the problem for sub-Saharan Africa's poorest performers does not appear to be simply insufficient agricultural growth to meet population increases. The problem is overall decline: these nations actually saw aggregate agricultural production drop below the levels that had been established within their borders a decade earlier.

WHAT HAS CAUSED the problem? In most of the countries with agricultural troubles the government has sought to place agriculture under state control and has discouraged private agricultural enterprise. Those wishing to pursue a private career in farming or food marketing often encounter serious difficulties. In many countries where malnutrition is believed to be a serious

problem, government policies have deliberately aimed at keeping agricultural prices low—in effect taxing farmers in order to subsidize the living standards of urban groups. (Urban populations in sub-Saharan Africa are politically more influential than people in the countryside.) The disincentives to increased production or improved marketing in many sub-Saharan nations are now considerable. Political decay has also affected the climate for agriculture and business in much of sub-Saharan Africa. Since the early 1970s many sub-Saharan countries have suffered from chronic domestic instability. Some have been engulfed by war or civil violence.

When populations go hungry today, it is usually because governments have somehow prevented them from feeding themselves: by disrupting civil life (Kampuchea, East Timor), by interfering with the operation of the marketplace (Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique), by obstructing relief operations (Uganda, Ethiopia), or by some combination of these. When the government is not involved in causing a food problem, the starving populations generally are socially or geographically isolated (like the nomads on the fringes of the Sahel or the pygmies in Central Africa), beyond the reach of either the markets or the relief bureaucracies that might otherwise have provided food and supplies. Such occurrences, however, have cost vastly fewer lives than the political famines of the past generation.

To see undernutrition as a bigger problem than it truly is, and its causes as different from what they truly are, is to suggest that the steps taken by most developing countries during the past several decades—to diversify their economies, modernize their agriculture, and participate in the global food system—are not only ineffective in promoting nutritional security but may also be a part of the problem. The opposite is probably true. The world in recent decades has been getting better at feeding itself. Where serious malnutrition does exist on a mass scale, it is rarely because of environmental calamity or the injurious impact of the international system. One way or another, it exists because human beings lack the purchasing power, or the access to markets, that would enable them to secure adequate food supplies for themselves from the globe's increasingly abundant harvests.

—Nicholas Eberstadt
and Clifford M. Lewis

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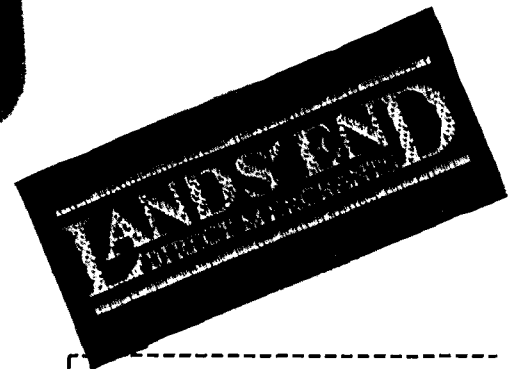
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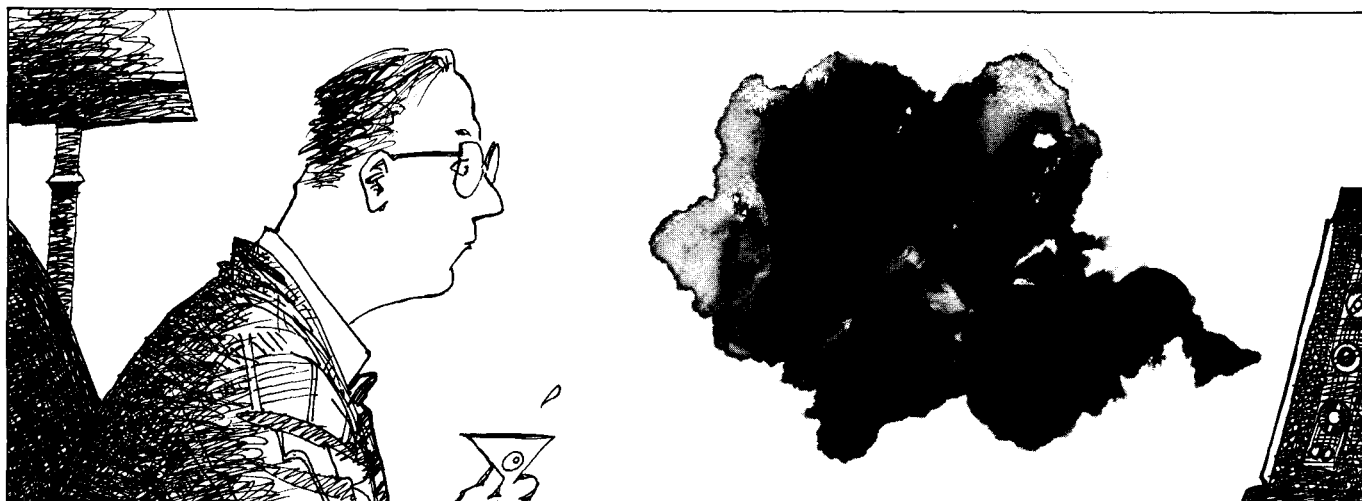
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THE WAR WE KNEW: AN ORAL HISTORY

BY IAN FRAZIER



NAM. SEEMS LIKE every time I hear a chopper fly overhead, or smell rice cooking, or see one of those little white terry-cloth hats everybody used to wear, I'm back there again in my mind. The heat, the sweat, the cries of the out-of-town buyers as the models came down the runway, the desperation, the fear, the madness: Nam.

I guess for as long as I live there will always be a little part of me that will remain forever in Nam. Not Vietnam, actually, but Nam, New Jersey. As it happened, I didn't get a chance to go over to Vietnam, because I was enrolled in college at the time with a really heavy course load, which included a rigorous work-study term at my dad's sportswear company in Nam, New Jersey, and which there was no way I could possibly get out of. I had intended to stay just long enough to make sense of the billing system; I ended up staying for ten years. (Of course, were it not for that previous commitment, I would definitely have enlisted and gone overseas and fought, probably in the Marines.)

For me the war went by in a blur. And after Saigon had fallen, and it was all over at last, I found I was left with a terrible feeling of emptiness. Only recently have I come to realize that all across the country there are thousands, perhaps millions, just like me—men who would have liked very much to serve their nation with honor in combat for thirteen months, if only their schedules had permitted. I determined to travel the country and meet some of these men, to talk

with them and share and laugh and cry and grow with them, to find out a little more who we really are. And as I listened to their stories, and recorded them so that others may one day understand, I learned that no matter how different these men might be, no matter what college or final club or major corporation they might come from, all spoke in the same voice—a voice I recognized as my own.

For Chandler C., the Vietnam War is a constricting orthopedic brace, which he must wear around his neck twenty-four hours a day. Confined by his injury to lonely penthouse apartments and country homes, Chandler receives no disability benefits to supplement the money he earns doing seasonal labor as an investment banker in New York and California. The government he believed in and conceivably would have fought for has let him down, but when he speaks, it is without bitterness:

"I wanted to go to Vietnam, but unfortunately it conflicted with a cooking class I was taking at the time. Then I discovered that I didn't need to go there, because, as we know, the medium of television brought Vietnam right into our living rooms. That's where I was the day I was wounded. It was just about sundown, the news was on, and I had turned away from the set for a moment to mix a cocktail at the drinks caddy. The next thing I knew there was this white flash and a dull report like a door slamming, and the antenna came flying across the room, and I felt an intense

pushing at my back and neck. Before I blacked out, I remember thinking, 'My God! I've got whiplash!' Months later I came to in my attorney's office.

"The road back has been a long one. I've had to do it all myself—I haven't received one dime from the Veterans Administration, not one dime. Slowly, painfully, I've started watching television again—a few minutes more each day. Sure, I feel forgotten. I mean, there's ten years of TV that just dropped from my life like they never existed, and I don't have so much as a Purple Heart, or an out-of-court settlement, or anything. But what I do have now is a wisdom that I don't think I could have achieved any other way, and the ability to take great simple pleasure in the life of day to day. Plus I still have my trust fund. Would I do it again? After all I've been through, my answer is still an unqualified yes."

Kenston P. comes from a military family. His great-grandfather admired greatly the young horsemen who rode with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders at the Battle of San Juan Hill; his grandfather came within a whisker of joining the service during the First World War; and his father was practically in the door of the recruiting office to enlist in the famed Lincoln Brigade bound for the Spanish Civil War when suddenly, so the story goes, he forgot to. For Kenston the strange and fatal fascination of Vietnam is something that comes from deep inside:

"I was heading into the Wang Hue LZ [Landing Zone] with a full-bird colonel

from the First Air Cav and our new platoon CO [Commanding Officer] when the shavetail looks out the door of the Huey and says, 'Sarge, aren't those APDs [Anti-personnel Devices] I see incoming over at our Fire Base Romeo?' So I says, 'Let me take an LRRP [Long-Range-Reconnaissance Patrol] on that, sir.' So I get four of my best jungle buddies—Dan Tanna, Tom Magnum, Rick, T.C., and some OAGs [Other Army Guys]—on a point trail recon sweep search, dust a few caribou, push through some hooches, and just then a mama-san starts to shout, and I look in the OC [Operations Center] and there's five VC MiG fighters just taxiing out. So I run up and tackle one by the landing gear and the next thing I know I'm at twenty thousand feet doing about Mach II, crawling past the turbine fans up to the canopy, and when I try to smash it with a karate chop the Cong starts EA [Evasive Action] to lose me, so I go back under the wing and change into my CDO [Civilian Disguise Outfit] as a hooker. So I climb back up and walk provocatively up and down on the nose of the plane. You should have seen that Charlie's eyes bug out, man. He pops the canopy, I jump inside, hit him with a karate chop, take over the controls, shoot down the other four planes, fly up to Hanoi, jump out of the plane right onto General Giap, deck him with a flying drop kick—

"Or, wait a minute. That wasn't me—I must've been thinking of somebody else. What I actually meant to say was I went to the mall and sat around all day, and not any of that other stuff. Sorry, my mistake."

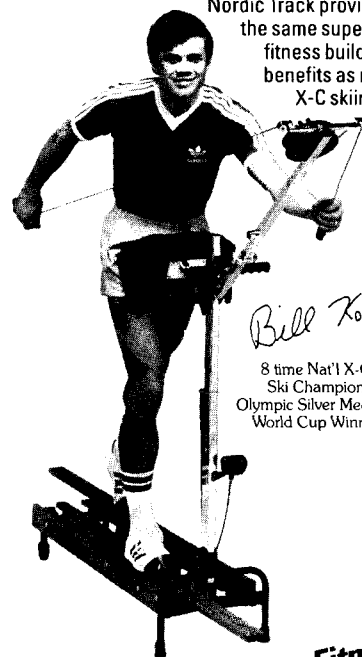
When General William Westmoreland asked in June of 1966 for another 100,000 combat troops in Vietnam, Bancroft de V. was still two weeks shy of his eighteenth birthday. As soon as he heard the news on the radio, Bancroft doctored his birth certificate, put on his best suit, took one last drive around town, kissed his parents good-bye, and then decided to vacuum out his car. It was the most important decision he would ever make. From that day forward Bancroft would be what is known as a "lifer"—a man who makes a career of not joining the Army, and therefore is still alive. Career men like Bancroft took our "loss" in Vietnam especially hard, often considering it a personal, as well as a national, failure:

"I feel just terribly, terribly responsible for what happened in Vietnam. I mean, certain events in my life dovetail

so closely with certain events over there that I have to believe it's more than coincidental. Like the time I loused up that Chem 20 exam. I'd been partying kind of a lot, and I only skimmed the chapter on enzymes, and there was a whole long question about it, and I blew the exam. I mean I really tubed it—got about as low a B as you can get. Well, that same week just happened to be when the Marines or whoever got driven back from Khe Sanh, or wherever it was. Or like the time I was crewing on my uncle's boat, and we were drinking rusty scuppers, and we completely alienated one of the judges and came in third in the Pelee Point race when we should've been an easy first. I got home that evening, picked up the newspaper—the Tet offensive. It was like everything was intertwined and I was putting out some kind of down energy that if I could only have controlled it, it might have made all the difference. I don't know. Nagging questions still keep me awake at night occasionally for short amounts of time. I mean, I can't get over the thought that if only I hadn't asked Puff Brewster up for that disastrous football weekend, South Vietnam might still be free today."

WHAT, THEN, HAVE we gained, those of us who came so darned close to going to Vietnam? Are we better people for having almost had that experience? As I traveled the country and looked into the young-old eyes of these men and dozens more like them, I came to the conclusion that we are. First, because now we know how we think we would react under fire, and how brave we would almost certainly be. With that knowledge comes a certain kind of inner peace. Second, we now understand a bit more about that grim science called war, as well as our own role in it. And, like it or not, war has always been a part of this world, and will doubtless remain so (barring some unforeseen improvements in the human animal) for many years to come. Our nation may well have need of us again. Invisible in our executive suites and expensive homes, we nevertheless represent a pool of manpower upon which she can always draw. Let us hope and pray that the trumpet never again sounds its awful summons. But if it does, we will once again be ready to follow into battle where it leads—providing, of course, that we aren't already all booked up with prior obligations and other things we have to do. □

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*An argument, based on polling data,
that the conservative shift in public policy during
the Reagan years has not been matched by a shift in public opinion*

THE MYTH OF AMERICA'S TURN TO THE RIGHT

BY THOMAS FERGUSON AND JOEL ROGERS

IF THE DEMOCRATS HAVE drawn one lesson from the disaster of the 1984 election, it is that their party must move to the right. Evidence for this assertion can be found in the strong support that House and Senate Democrats gave to the Gramm-Rudman amendment, which would eliminate the budget deficit by severely cutting domestic programs bequeathed by the New Deal and the Great Society. And it can be found as well in post-election calls for a right turn from influential Democrats such as Robert Strauss, the former Democratic Party chairman, and such rising party stars as Charles Robb, the former governor of Virginia, and Bruce Babbitt, the governor of Arizona. A chorus of analyses, editorials, and op-ed pieces by prominent journalists and academics echo these revisionist Democrats.

American voters, it is said again and again, have become more conservative and have finally killed off the New Deal. To avoid further decline the party must also move to the right, "where the voters are."

But is this really where the voters are? Has the American public shifted to the right? In view of recent legislation and executive action it is hard to argue with the proposition that a right turn in American public policy has indeed taken place. Following some much less significant precedents established by Democratic and Republican Administrations in the 1970s, the Reagan Administration has broken sharply with many of the major policies championed by New Deal-oriented Democratic (and even Republican) Presidents from the 1930s through the mid-1960s. Its cur-



rent tax-reform proposals aside, it has passed extremely regressive tax legislation. It has cut social welfare programs and has made plain its desire for far deeper cuts. It has dismantled or gutted a host of regulatory programs and abandoned the view that the federal government has a major positive role to play in guaranteeing the rights of minorities and of the victims of discrimination. More than any other Administration since the 1930s, it has moved away from the New Deal tradition of multilateral internationalism and free trade. While shifting dollars away from social programs, it has sponsored the largest sustained peacetime military buildup in U.S. history. And it has vastly increased the size of federal budget deficits, thus creating system-wide pressures for a reduction in the scope of federal activity.

Together, the policy initiatives of the Reagan Administration announce the end of the New Deal era in American politics. Because the Democratic Party originated that era, and set the agenda for national politics during it, these initiatives also announce the decline of the Democratic Party as the dominant force in American public life. What might be termed the New Deal party system, within which the Democrats held the upper hand, has finally collapsed.

But what is at stake in the current policy changes in American politics is of concern to more than Democratic loyalists. The very structure of American politics has changed, with the center of gravity of the American party system—including both Democrats and Republicans—shifting to the right. Because the stakes are so high, it is important to

consider closely the basic assumptions of political debate now shared by the two major parties. Above all, it is vital to know if the central claim made by revisionist Democrats and Republicans alike—that a majority of the public has reached a stable, well-informed consensus on the desirability of right, or center-right, policies—is true.

We do not believe that it is. While there is overwhelming evidence of a policy realignment, there is little direct evidence that mass public sentiment has turned against the domestic programs of the New Deal, or even the most important components of the Great Society, and little evidence of a stable shift to the right in public attitudes on military and foreign policy. On the contrary, poll after poll demonstrates that the basic structure of public opinion in the United States has remained relatively stable in recent years. To the extent that there have been changes in public opinion on particular issues, most have tended to run *against* the direction of public policy. Moreover, despite major Republican victories in 1980 and 1984, recent voting behavior and trends in partisan identification provide little evidence of an electoral realignment.

AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION HAS LONG BEEN BEST DESCRIBED as both ideologically conservative and programmatically liberal. That is, Americans are opposed to big government, and respond favorably to the myths and symbols of competitive capitalism in the abstract. When it comes to assessing specific government programs or the behavior of actual business enterprises, however, they support government spending in a variety of domestic areas and are profoundly suspicious of big business. Similarly, Americans are strongly anti-Communist and generally hostile to the Soviet Union, but they are wary of using force in the pursuit of U.S. foreign-policy objectives and anxious to live in peace with Russia. This basic opinion structure may appear schizophrenic, but as Walter Dean Burnham, a political scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has observed, at least on domestic issues it probably reflects voter adaptation to a political system in which the government is interventionist but nonsocialist. In any case, it has been stable for at least a generation.

Within this structure, moreover, the trend in public opinion over the past generation has been toward greater liberalism. During the 1970s, and particularly after 1973, the rate of increase in support for liberalism slowed somewhat. In addition, as we will note below, there were some exceptions to the general liberal trend. But none of this amounted to a change in the basically liberal direction of public opinion.

We begin with domestic issues. Revisionist Democrats commonly claim that voter support for their party's traditional positions on typical New Deal issues—including government management of the economy; protecting the Social Security system, the aged, and workers; and, at least since the mid-1960s, medical care—has long been in

decline, and that the present weakness of the party at the national level is a long-term consequence of that fact. Typically it is argued that rising incomes in the post-New Deal era have made voters more middle class, both in the sense that the majority of Americans are living far better than their parents did (and therefore no longer support social programs) and in the sense that they no longer respond positively to FDR-style attacks on "economic royalists," made in the name of the common man.

The survey data, however, do not bear this argument out. A recent effort by the Princeton political scientist Stanley Kelley to map the "salience" (that is, the importance to voters in their choice of party or candidate) of such New Deal issues found a remarkable stability in voter attitudes in presidential elections from 1952 to 1976. In 1952, 85 percent of the voters found New Deal issues salient—that is, 85 percent of the electorate cited positions on such issues as something to like or dislike about the major parties or their candidates or both. The figure dropped to 76 percent of the electorate in 1956, and varied only slightly over the next five elections, at 74 to 77 percent of the electorate. Obviously, New Deal issues have not become less important to American voters since the late 1950s. Moreover, among those who saw a position on New Deal issues as "biasing" their choice—that is, leading them to favor a particular party or candidate—the Democrats enjoyed the support of strong majorities in every election during the 1952–1976 period. The average Democratic bias was just under 62 percent. Put otherwise, if those elections had been decided solely on those issues, Democrats would have won them all by landslides. Clearly, Democratic Party identification with traditional positions on New Deal issues was a major party strength, not a weakness.

The stability of such attitudes aside, it is commonly argued that the public moved sharply to the right during the late 1970s on most domestic issues, and that a groundswell of popular opposition to domestic-spending programs and government regulation of business was an important reason for Ronald Reagan's election in 1980. In fact no such groundswell occurred. To the contrary, public skepticism toward business, and support for government regulation of it, actually increased on several dimensions during the 1970s. From 1969 to 1979, for example, the share of the public thinking that there was "too much power concentrated in the hands of a few large companies for the good of the nation" increased from 61 to 79 percent; those thinking that business as a whole was making "too much profit" grew from 38 to 51 percent. Over the period 1971 to 1979 the percentage thinking that "government should put a limit on the profits companies can make" nearly doubled, rising from 33 to 60 percent.

Nor was there any evidence of an upsurge in support for domestic-spending cuts. The National Opinion Research Center found in 1980 that only 21 percent of Americans (the average across the different spending areas) thought that "too much" was being spent on environmental,

health, education, welfare, and urban-aid programs—the same percentage holding that belief in 1976, 1977, and 1978. The percentage of Americans who thought that “too little” was spent on those programs was also remarkably stable over the 1976–1980 period, dropping only from 44 to 42 percent, while the combined percentage of those who thought the amount spent was “too little” or “about right” was never lower than 72 percent.

As the rollback in regulation and cutbacks in domestic spending became evident during Reagan’s first term, the public increased its support for regulatory and social programs. A *Los Angeles Times* poll in 1982, for example, asked respondents if they would favor “keeping” or “easing” regulations that President Reagan “[said] are holding back American free enterprise.” Even given this language, the percentage favoring “keeping” outweighed that favoring “easing” regulations regarding the environment (49–28), industrial safety (66–18), the teenage minimum wage (58–29), auto emission and safety standards (59–29), federal lands (43–27), and offshore oil drilling (46–29). In 1983 the *Los Angeles Times* again asked about regulatory policy and found that only five percent of Americans considered regulations “too strict,” while 42 percent thought they were “not strong enough.” A CBS News/*New York Times* poll, meanwhile, found that support for the relatively extreme proposition that “protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost” increased from 45 percent in 1981 to 58 percent in 1983.

The movement in support of social-spending programs was similar. An NBC News poll found that those agreeing with the statement that Reagan was “going too far in attempting to cut back or eliminate government social programs” rose from 37 to 52 percent over 1981–1983. Comparing the results of a 1982 survey with one commissioned in 1978, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations found a remarkable 26-percentage-point jump in those wishing to “expand” rather than “cut back” welfare and relief programs, typically the easiest target of attack among social-spending programs. Support for government action to assist the unemployed was particularly broad. By early 1983 a CBS News/*New York Times* poll found that 74 percent of the public favored a government jobs program even if it meant increasing the federal deficit.

Such sentiments were neither swamped by the Reagan recovery nor abandoned in the 1984 landslide for the incumbent President. Even on the eve of Reagan’s second inauguration, with his approval rating at a record 68 percent and drums beating loudly about the huge federal deficit, a *Washington Post*/ABC News Poll found that only 35 percent of Americans favored substantial cuts in social programs to reduce the deficit (although 65 percent believed such cuts were on the way). Representative was a CBS/*New York Times* poll conducted shortly after the election which compared responses then with those in a post-election survey in 1980:

There is no suggestion in this poll that the American public has grown more conservative during the four years of the Reagan administration. If anything, there is more willingness now to spend money on domestic programs and a better assessment of the social programs of the 1960’s.

A year later the results were similar. A January, 1986, CBS/*New York Times* survey found that voter attitudes showed “no consistent evidence of change, certainly not in a conservative direction,” over the course of the Reagan presidency. On social programs, for example, the poll showed that:

Fewer people (40 percent versus 51 percent as Mr. Reagan was coming into office) think that welfare recipients could get along without welfare payments. Fewer people (51 percent versus 63) believe that government creates more problems than it solves. . . . Even more significantly, perhaps, fully 66 percent think the Government should spend money now on efforts similar to those of the Great Society programs to help the poor people in the United States. That finding seems to run counter to many Democrats’ view that there is no longer any political mileage in such Federal poverty programs.

ON SOCIAL ISSUES AS WELL, AMERICAN ATTITUDES betray no evidence of a right turn. In general, religion, feminism, civil liberties, abortion, and race relations are the policy areas in which the public has shown the sharpest increase in liberalism since the Second World War. The rate of increase has slowed during the post-1973 period, but at no time has the public actually become more conservative on these issues. And on several of the key questions highlighted by the Reagan Administration the public became more liberal over the course of Reagan’s first term. Regarding abortion, for example, an NBC News exit poll in 1984 found that two thirds of the electorate endorsed the legalization of abortion, with the decision “left to the woman and her physician,” while only a quarter did not. Soon after the election an ABC News poll found that the share of Americans supporting the relatively radical position that women should have a right to abortion on demand, “no matter what the reason,” actually increased over Reagan’s first term, rising from 40 percent in 1981 to 52 percent in 1985, while the percentage opposing abortion on demand declined from 59 to 46 percent. According to a *Los Angeles Times* poll, only 23 percent of the electorate supported a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion, and only 32 percent of those who voted for Reagan endorsed his policy on abortion. Louis Harris reports that Americans oppose requiring school prayer by 51 to 43 percent and support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment by 60 to 34 percent. And few Americans are enthusiasts of Jerry Falwell, the most prominent leader of the religious right. A 1984 *Los Angeles Times* exit poll found that only 16 percent of the voters approved of the minister.

Recent trends in public attitudes toward affirmative ac-

tion merit special notice, if only because of the Reagan Administration's sustained attack on affirmative action and the revisionists' repeated insistence on the public's impatience with such "special interests" as women and minorities. In 1978, Louis Harris reported, only 45 percent of the public agreed that "if there are no affirmative action programs helping women and minorities in employment and education, then these groups will continue to fail to get their share of jobs and higher education, thereby continuing past discrimination in the future"; 36 percent disagreed. By 1982 the percentage agreeing had risen to 57, and 39 percent disagreed; by September of 1985, 71 percent agreed and 27 percent disagreed. Those favoring a "federal law requiring affirmative action programs for women and minorities in employment and education, provided there are no rigid quotas," numbered 67 percent by 1984, and those opposed, 18 percent; by 1985 support had risen to 75 percent (opposition was 21 percent). Here, too, the movement of public opinion has been directly opposite to the movement of public policy.

Once again, in noting the generally liberal trend in American public opinion on domestic issues in recent years, we are not arguing that this trend is universal. American support for harsher sentencing of criminals has grown dramatically over the past two decades, and this may be interpreted as a move toward greater conservatism. Resistance to tax increases—although, significantly, not demands for tax reduction—grew during the 1970s, and very likely worked to soften support for increased social spending, at least in some areas. Given all the countervailing trends, however, it would obviously be mistaken to generalize from these two exceptions, and considered on their own terms, neither advances the revisionist case.

Support for harsher sentencing of criminals began to grow in the mid-1960s. The trend coincides with the real and dramatic increase in crime observable since then, and not with the much later right turn in public policy. Nor has growing support for harsher sentences interrupted trends of increasing support for social tolerance and civil liberties, and declining support for violent responses to crime (questions of perceived self-defense aside). It thus seems to reflect public frustration with a manifest policy failure, not a more general lurch to the right.

Attitudes toward taxes, on the other hand, are surprisingly muted and lenient, given the background facts. Over the past generation the burden and unfairness of the tax system has increased substantially for Americans of average income. From the mid-1950s to 1980 the tax burden of the average American family nearly doubled, and from the mid-1960s to 1980 the federal tax system became significantly less progressive, as the corporate share of federal tax revenues dropped sharply and the share provided by regressive payroll taxes skyrocketed. It is not surprising that by the 1970s overwhelming numbers of Americans thought the tax system was unfair. In 1977, near the high point of the much-publicized "tax revolt," Harris reported that 89 percent of Americans thought that "the big tax bur-

den falls on the little man in this country"; in 1978 Harris reported that 80 percent thought taxes were "unreasonable." The same year, H&R Block reported that 74 percent believed middle-income families were paying too much in taxes, while 76 percent thought high-income families were paying too little, and 72 percent thought the same about large corporations.

Despite this very widespread perception of unfairness, however, the *increase* in the (always large) share of the population that thought its own taxes were too high was negligible during the 1970s. In Harris polls it rose only one percentage point over the 1969–1978 period. Public opinion on trading off services and taxes was also stable in the late 1970s. The percentage who favored keeping "taxes and services about where they are" (45) was the same in 1975 and 1980; so was the percentage (38) favoring a decrease in services and taxes; the small share who wished to increase both actually rose slightly over the period. Finally, it is important to emphasize that among the general public (as opposed to business elites) the salience of the tax issue has never been great; only tiny percentages have ever named "high taxes" as the country's most important problem, and the 1970s were no exception.

On balance, then, it seems reasonable to conclude that the heavier burdens on average Americans, and especially the greater unfairness in the tax system, made the public more resistant to tax increases and more receptive to promises to cut taxes. This did not, however, set off a groundswell of public clamor for the reduction of taxes, and it certainly did not provide a mandate for the regressive revisions of the tax system made during Reagan's first term. As of January, 1985, three quarters of Americans thought the tax system was "unfair to the ordinary working man or woman." Here again, then, movements in public opinion have a highly imperfect, or even negative, relation to movements in public policy.

AND THEN THERE IS FOREIGN POLICY. HERE, IT should be said, there *is* evidence, particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, of a conservative turn in public attitudes on the important issue of military spending. According to the Gallup Poll, from 1976 to 1981 the percentage of Americans who believed that the United States spent too much on defense declined from 36 to 15 percent, while the share that believed the United States spent too little grew from 22 to 51 percent. This shift is by far the strongest piece of evidence for the claim that American public opinion has moved to the right, and it is commonly cited as a mandate, delivered to and acted upon by both the Carter and the Reagan Administration, to increase U.S. military outlays sharply. That it is the only case of strong convergence between public views and public-policy changes should give pause to those making such a claim. There are other reasons, as well, why this mandate is not clearcut evidence for the revisionist Democrats' case.

First, the largest part of the shift occurred very late in

the period, in 1979 and 1980, after military authorizations had already begun rising dramatically. As late as December of 1978 NBC News/Associated Press showed that 50 percent of the population actually favored a decrease in military spending over either an increase or a continuation of spending at current levels. Since popular consensus on the need for a military buildup only followed that buildup, it cannot be readily identified as its cause.

Second, even admitting this exceptional congruence between public opinion and policy change, there is good reason to believe that the shift in public opinion was itself produced by elite action. At the risk of belaboring the obvious, we should point out that the public does not form its opinions in a vacuum, and by the late 1970s anxious elites were mobilizing an enormous campaign to increase military spending. Careful studies of media views of military spending, for example, show increasingly hawkish sentiments expressed over the period and show the public's opinions consistently following, not leading, the views of elites. This campaign reached a crescendo in 1979–1980, when the fall of the Pahlavi regime in Iran, the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were repeatedly cited as proof that U.S. military capabilities were seriously weakened. By 1980, with both parties calling for increases in military spending, with Carter, the Democratic candidate, denouncing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as “the worst threat to world peace since World War Two,” and with Reagan, the Republican candidate, insisting that the United States had “unilaterally disarmed” during the previous decade, opposition to a military buildup simply ceased to be a respectable political position. In this context it is not surprising that large sections of the public expressed concern about U.S. military readiness. But this picture contrasts sharply with familiar claims that the public simply “woke up” to the need for a military buildup.

Third, the military “mandate,” as it turned out, was fragile and short-lived. After peaking in 1980 and early 1981, support for increasing military outlays dropped sharply. Harris reported that the percentage of Americans in favor of “increasing . . . the present defense budget” fell

from 71 percent in 1980 to 14 percent by early 1983. An ABC/*Washington Post* poll found that those who thought the Reagan buildup was “going too far” rose from 28 percent in 1981 to 51 percent in 1983, while the National Opinion Research Center found that those who favored reductions in military spending rose from 11 to 32 percent over 1980–1983. By that time, indeed, the general distribution of attitudes on military spending resembled the situation in the early 1970s, close to the height of domestic opposition to the Vietnam War.

Fourth, and finally, the strength of public support for any given spending initiative is best assessed in the con-

text of other spending priorities. Public perception of the need for trade-offs between military and social outlays clearly played an important role in diminishing support for the buildup, and does not help the revisionist case. ABC News/*Washington Post* polls over the period from early 1981 to late 1983 showed that support for increased domestic spending grew from 49 to 67 percent for programs directed to the poor, from 43 to 75 percent for education programs, and from 49 to 66 percent for health programs—all while support for military spending declined. The Harris Survey provided even more direct evidence on this point by asking respondents to choose between cutting back particular social programs and cutting back military outlays. For federal aid to cities those preferring cuts in military spending to cuts in the program grew

from 41 to 54 percent over 1981–1984, for federal aid to education from 60 to 71 percent, for federal health programs from 58 to 67 percent. For unemployment compensation they grew from 46 to 70 percent over 1981–1982 alone. Here, too, it is very difficult to reconcile changes in public opinion with the changes in public policy inaugurated during Reagan's first term.

For all these reasons, then, the increased support for military spending is a weak peg on which to rest the revisionist case.

Even granting a brief increase in support for additional military spending, however, what about public support for the use of force abroad? Once again there is a split between Americans' professed ideological positions and their will-



ingness to support specific, especially costly, acts of intervention. As Richard Lugar, the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, summarized this state of affairs in January, 1985:

In poll after poll, Americans express their concern about hostile governments which imperiled our interests in Latin America and elsewhere. But in the same polls, Americans display an equal and overwhelming opposition to any course of action which might actually frustrate governments which are harmful to us.

More concretely, while short-term military operations against tiny opponents are sometimes (briefly) applauded, as in the case of the invasion of Grenada, Americans are generally opposed to sustained military interventions abroad. During Reagan's first term early majority support in 1982 for a U.S. Marine presence in Lebanon turned to solid opposition by late 1983. By September, Harris reported 61 percent disapproving of Reagan's handling of the situation there. The bombing of the Marine barracks in late October produced a brief boost in public support for a continued military presence—Gallup reported that it increased from 28 to 34 percent between October and late November—but by mid-January of 1984 it was back down to 28 percent. Disapproval of Reagan's general handling of the situation rose from 52 percent in November of 1983 to 60 percent by early February of 1984.

With regard to other U.S. interventions similar results were reported. Over the period 1982–1984 Harris reported general disapproval of Administration policies in El Salvador consistently running at around 65 percent. Opposition to sending troops to El Salvador was even higher: on major network surveys it averaged more than 80 percent. Government policies toward Nicaragua were also unpopular. Opposition to the U.S. mining of Nicaragua's harbors, according to a CBS/*New York Times* poll, ran at 67 percent; the same poll reported two-to-one majorities opposed to aid to the contras, even when the question was, Should the United States "help people in Nicaragua who are trying to overthrow the pro-Soviet government there"?

THE SONG

The tree, cut down this morning,
is already chainsawed and quartered, stripped
of its branches, transported and stacked.
Not an instant too early, its girl slipped away.
She is singing now, a small figure
glimpsed in the surface of the pond.
As the wood, if taken too quickly, will sing
a little in the stove, still remembering her.

—Jane Hirshfield

Finally, in what is arguably the single most important area of foreign and military policy—U.S. strategic policy toward, and relations with, the Soviet Union—recent polls do indicate a profound shift in public sentiment. Here again, however, the change runs in a direction exactly opposite to the direction of policy change during Reagan's first term. Despite the talk among some Administration officials of winnable nuclear war, and Reagan's own bellicose rhetoric against the "evil force," survey data indicate that public aversion to nuclear weapons is strong and growing, that arms control meets with wide public approval, and that an overwhelming majority of Americans, while continuing to disapprove of the Soviet Union, are more reluctant than ever to prompt a showdown with the USSR and want to live more peacefully with it. A late 1984 survey of public attitudes toward the USSR, co-authored by the noted pollster Daniel Yankelovich, summed up the American mood as one of "live-and-let-live pragmatism." Two thirds of Americans believe that the United States should let the Soviets have their system of government while we retain ours, since "there's room in the world for both," and 53 percent think the United States would actually be safer if it stopped trying to halt the spread of communism to other countries (only 22 percent disagreed).

Fear of nuclear war and widespread skepticism about the possibility of "winning" the arms race provide the foundations for this new pragmatism. Ninety-six percent of Americans believe that "picking a fight with the Soviet Union is too dangerous in a nuclear world"; 89 percent believe "there can be no winner in an all-out nuclear war. . . both the United States and the Soviet Union would be completely destroyed"; 68 percent (and 78 percent of those under thirty) think that if both sides keep building nuclear weapons, instead of negotiating their elimination, it is only a matter of time before they are used; and 38 percent (50 percent of those under thirty) think that a full-scale nuclear war is likely to occur in the next ten years. In light of these views it is striking that 50 percent of Americans think that the Reagan Administration is playing nuclear "chicken" with the Soviet Union.

Regarding arms, Americans certainly do not want to "lose" the arms race (57 percent, for example, think the United States should continue to build new and "better" nuclear weapons), but equally certainly they do not think it can be "won." Eighty-four percent of Americans believe that the United States no longer has nuclear superiority; 90 percent think that both the United States and the Soviet Union already have an "overkill" capacity; and 92 percent believe that if the United States developed a bigger nuclear arsenal than the Soviets', the USSR would simply keep building until it matched the United States.

Indeed, concern about nuclear weapons and the current state of U.S.–Soviet relations leads strong majorities of Americans to favor substantial revisions of U.S. nuclear strategy and positions on arms control: 77 percent believe that the United States should soon have a policy of not using nuclear weapons to respond to a conventional

Soviet attack; 74 percent believe that the United States should now have a policy of never using nuclear weapons in a battlefield situation; upwards of 75 percent have for years favored a bilateral nuclear freeze; 61 percent favor a *unilateral* six-month freeze on nuclear-weapons development to see if the Soviets respond in kind, even if they take advantage of the gesture; 56 percent support signing an arms-control agreement even if foolproof verification is impossible; and 84 percent are opposed to using new weapons as bargaining chips in arms-control negotiations.

BUT IF PUBLIC OPINION HAS GENERALLY RUN AGAINST the right turn in public policy, why was Reagan so spectacularly popular during his first term, and especially during the first two years of that term, when most of his Administration's major programs were put in place? The answer is simple: he was not.

Press claims that Reagan's first term marked him as the most popular President of the postwar period are simply mistaken. Gallup reports that over the length of that term his approval rating—which measures satisfaction with job performance—averaged 50 percent, lower than the averages of Eisenhower (69), Kennedy (71), Johnson (52), and Nixon (56), and not far above that of Carter (47). Reagan's high point was reached shortly after taking office, when, in May of 1981, he recorded a 68 percent approval rating. Four out of the five other elected postwar Presidents had higher peaks—Eisenhower (79 percent), Kennedy (83), Johnson (80), and Carter (75)—while Nixon's 67 percent approval peak was not significantly lower. In addition, Reagan's low point of 35 percent, reached in January, 1983, was significantly lower than those of Eisenhower and Kennedy, matched the level that Johnson sank to just before he withdrew from national politics, in 1968, and came close to the 24 percent approval rating that Nixon received in July and August of 1974, just before he resigned the presidency in disgrace.

During the first two years of Reagan's presidency, when his Administration made its greatest advances, his approval ratings were particularly unimpressive. The average approval ratings for his first and second year were 54 and 44 percent, respectively. The first- and second-year average percent approval ratings for Carter (62 and 47), Nixon (61 and 57), Kennedy (75 and 72), and Eisenhower (69 and 65) were all substantially higher.

As Reagan's approval rating fell in the polls over the 1981–1982 period, the press began emphasizing his enormous *personal* popularity. Readers and viewers were told that although the public did not like what Reagan was doing to them, they loved the man who was doing it. There is some measure of truth in this. Reagan's ratings for personal appeal have always remained well above his ratings for job performance. But press accounts commonly did not go on to point out that significant differentials between performance- and personal-approval ratings of Presidents are utterly routine, that they always show greater personal

approval than performance approval (Americans, for whatever reason, want to believe that their Presidents are nice people), and that in fact the differential Reagan enjoyed was proportionately *smaller* than those of his postwar predecessors, not larger.

Of course, Reagan's approval ratings rose spectacularly over the 1983–1984 period, climbing from their low of 35 percent in early 1983 to a strong, though hardly unprecedented, 61 percent by the time of the election. (Reagan's average approval ratings for his third and fourth years were 44 and 56 percent, respectively, as compared with Carter's 38 and 40 percent, Nixon's 50 and 56 percent, Eisenhower's 71 and 73 percent, and Kennedy's 1963 rating of 64 percent.) They have continued strong ever since. But as virtually all careful analyses of the trends in Reagan's approval ratings conclude, this upward swing, like the downward one before it, seems to have been caused almost entirely by changes in economic conditions in the country (see the first chart on page 50). It gives no evidence of a magic bond between Reagan and the public. Indeed, if one controls for economic conditions, Reagan's popularity does not differ significantly from Jimmy Carter's.

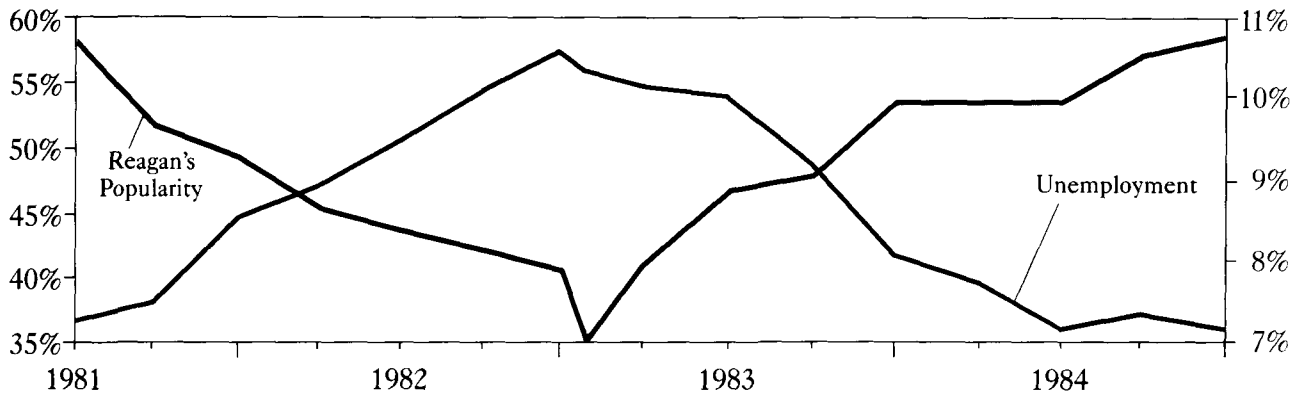
Polls leading up to the election also fail to support the myth of the Great Persuader. ABC News/*Washington Post* surveys, for example, asked voters if they liked the President personally, irrespective of his policies, and then asked if they intended to vote for him. What emerged consistently from these polls was that personal approval was far less important than policy approval in determining voter choice. For example, a survey in May of 1984 reported that 70 percent of those who said they liked Reagan personally but disapproved of his policies were not planning to vote for him.

Finally, it is important to stress that the policy approval Reagan did receive in the 1984 vote was almost entirely confined to judgments on recent economic performance and on hopes that the economy would continue to boom along. With economic considerations swamping other policy concerns, this led to anomalous results: vast numbers of voters cast ballots for Reagan even though they disagreed with his positions on a host of issues. This was particularly striking among voters who thought they would be better off under a Reagan second term. A *Washington Post*/ABC News poll in September of 1984 found that 53 percent of registered voters thought they would be personally better off. Many of this group disagreed with Reagan on a range of issues; nonetheless, they said overwhelmingly that they would vote for him (see the second chart on page 50).

Exit polls, as already indicated, confirmed such results. On virtually all the important issues identified with the "Reagan revolution" in public policy, public opinion ran against the President. Moreover, of those voting for Reagan only six percent (as compared with an already low 11 percent in 1980) directly identified his conservatism as one of the things that mattered to them, and only five percent offered agreement with his views as their chief reason for support.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF PRESIDENTIAL POPULARITY

THE IMPACT OF THE JOBLESS RATE



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; the Gallup Poll.

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING VERSUS "THE ISSUES"

"I will do better financially under Reagan, but . . ."

	Prefer Reagan Anyway	Prefer Mondale	Undecided
<i>disapprove of Reagan's handling of the economy</i>	63%	35%	2%
<i>disapprove of his handling of foreign policy</i>	66	32	2
<i>have the same views as Democrats on most issues</i>	79	19	4
<i>feel the Republicans are more conservative than themselves on most issues</i>	76	22	2
<i>feel Reagan sides with special interests</i>	81	16	3
<i>feel Mondale sides with average citizen</i>	86	13	1
<i>feel Mondale programs will be fairer to all people</i>	71	27	2
<i>feel Mondale will reduce the threat of nuclear war more than Reagan will</i>	68	31	1
<i>feel blacks have been hurt, not helped, by Reagan</i>	77	21	2

Source: *Washington Post/ABC News Poll*, September 6-11, 1984.

ELECTIONOMICS: PERSONAL INCOME AND ELECTORAL OUTCOME

Percent change from previous year in real per capita disposable income, in 1972 dollars, for selected election years.

Year	%Change	Incumbent Party	Year	%Change	Incumbent Party
1932	- 14.2	loses	1960	0.0	loses
1936	+ 11.4	wins	1964	+ 5.6	wins
1940	+ 5.3	wins	1968	+ 3.1	loses
1944	+ 2.2	wins	1972	+ 2.9	wins
1948	+ 3.5	wins	1976	+ 2.6	loses
1952	+ 1.1	loses	1980	- 0.6	loses
1956	+ 2.7	wins	1984	+ 5.8	wins

Source: *Economic Report of the President* (Washington, D.C., 1985), Table B-24.

The conclusion is inescapable. With the exception of the rise in support for increased military spending, which was rapidly reversed, there is little or nothing in the public-opinion data to support the claim that the American public moved to the right in the years preceding Reagan's 1980 victory. If American public opinion drifted anywhere over Reagan's first term, it was toward the left. And there is nothing in the data to support the claim that Reagan's first term marked him as the most popular President in modern times or that he has a magical hold over the electorate.

MOST STUDIES OF AMERICAN VOTING BEHAVIOR also fail to find evidence of a major realignment of voter allegiance toward the Republicans. The most carefully conducted studies of "policy voting" in 1980, for example, conclude that the vote was more a negative referendum on Carter than an endorsement of Reagan's policies.

In 1984, to be sure, Reagan's personal victory was spectacular. He took 59.2 percent of the two-party vote and scored the second greatest electoral-college landslide in modern American history (exceeded only by Roosevelt's percentage in 1936). Below the presidential level, however, the gains were unimpressive. In 1980, in a less sweeping national victory, Reagan brought thirty-three new representatives and twelve new senators with him. In 1984, in contrast, the Democrats posted a net loss of only fourteen seats in the House and a net gain of two seats in the Senate. In state elections they dropped one governorship and control over five of the ninety-nine state legislative houses. These minor losses did not erase the gains made during the 1982 midterm elections. Indeed, the Republicans now have slightly fewer seats in the Senate and the House, and half a dozen fewer governorships, than when Reagan first took office.

If anything, the election gives evidence of further electoral *dealignment*, with voting defined ever less sharply along partisan lines, and a continued decline in the capacity of conventional politics to organize and integrate electoral demand. On such basic dimensions of electoral vitality as overall participation rates and competition in congressional races, for example, the election results again suggested continued decay. As a percentage of the potential electorate, voter turnout was stagnant, rising only 0.7 percent from its 1980 level to run at 55 percent. Some 77 million eligible Americans—24 million more than voted for Reagan—abstained. Thus while Reagan's 59.2 percent share of the two-party vote was a certifiable landslide, his share of the potential electorate, as in 1980, was certifiably not. In 1980 Reagan garnered only 27.6 percent of the potential electorate, a smaller share than Wendell Wilkie won in his decisive 1940 loss to Roosevelt. In 1984 Reagan garnered 32.3 percent, or a smaller share than that gained by Eisenhower in both his elections, by either Kennedy or Nixon in 1960, by Johnson in 1964, or by Nixon in 1972.

Congressional competition reached an all-time low in 1984. Both the number (408) and the percentage (93.8) of congressional races including incumbents reached historic highs, as did the number (392) and percentage (96.1) of races won by incumbents. There were also relatively few close races. A stunning 74.9 percent of winning candidates took 60 percent or more of the vote—the highest such figure on record, with records going back to 1824. More immediately, as the divergent results at the presidential and sub-national level reported above indicate, there was very little partisan channeling of the vote that Reagan got. Despite sharp differences in the general political climate in 1982 and 1984, in the 340 House races where candidates from both parties faced each other both times, the net swing toward the Republican Party over the 1982–1984 period was a paltry 3.7 percentage points.

Some analysts of recent trends in party identification nevertheless point to a rise in the percentage of Americans, and particularly in the percentage of young people, identifying with the Republican Party. At first glance, again, the evidence looks highly suggestive. In the last quarter of 1984 Gallup and other polls reported that the ratio of Democratic "identifiers" to Republican ones was about 1.1:1, closer to statistical parity than at any time in the previous forty years. And a 15-percentage-point swing toward the Republicans among younger (eighteen-to-twenty-nine-year-old) voters in the 1984 election led all other age groups. Unfortunately for the revisionists, however, this proves next to nothing.

First, public affection for the two parties is volatile. Public opinion on which party is best able to handle "the most important problem" facing the country, for example, which is commonly used as an indicator of public support for each party, has zigzagged repeatedly over the past four presidential elections. Explicit identification with the major parties was less volatile in the late 1970s but has become more so in the past few years. Over the period 1975–1979 the Gallup Poll reported that Republican identifiers composed 21 to 23 percent of the electorate, with Democratic identifiers taking a 45 to 48 percent share. Then, as the economy declined under Jimmy Carter, Reagan won the 1980 election, and the Republicans moved aggressively in 1981 on their tax and spending proposals, the number of Republican identifiers increased dramatically. It rose from 21 percent of the electorate in the first quarter of 1980 to 28 percent in the third quarter of 1981; over the same period Democratic identifiers dropped from 47 to 41 percent. At the time, there was excited talk of a realignment in American politics. But just as quickly as the Republicans had narrowed the gap to thirteen points, it widened once again. Over the next seven quarters Republican identifiers fell to 23 percent of the electorate and Democratic identifiers increased to 46 percent. Finally, as the recovery took hold, the Democrats ran a campaign that promised higher taxes but not economic growth, and Reagan won another election, the Republicans surged forward again in a party-identification split of 38 percent Demo-

cratic, 35 percent Republican in the fourth quarter of 1984.

Of course, such short-term volatility in party identification, which suggests the need for caution in interpreting the figures, could be consistent with a long-term trend toward the Republican Party. However, the data on party identification over time do not support this claim either.

The virtual parity between the major parties reported in late 1984 and 1985, for example, is not unprecedented in the post-New Deal period. During the 1940s, when, revisionists claim, the "New Deal coalition of groups" was at its peak, comparable or even closer conditions of parity obtained. In 1940 and 1944 the ratios were the same as in late 1984 (1.1:1); in 1946 the parties were perfectly balanced at 1:1; after an uptick for the Democrats in the late 1940s they returned to roughly the same level (1.2:1) in 1952, and bounced around considerably afterward. Given the ups and downs in the ratio, if one takes the whole post-New Deal period as a point of reference, different trends in party identification can be shown, depending on what year one begins with. If one begins in 1937, 1949, or 1952, the trend (albeit slight) in party identification has actually been toward the Democrats. If one begins in 1964, the high point of Democratic identification, the trend (again slight) has been toward the Republicans. Since the data can be used to show different things, the real question is where it is most appropriate to begin the observations. The data alone, of course, do not answer that.

The volatility and ambiguity of trends suggest deeper problems in such identification data. Party identification is interesting chiefly as a predictor of how people will vote once they get inside a polling booth and how they can be expected to continue to vote in the future. But both the election results reported earlier and the volatility and inconclusiveness of trends in party sentiment emphasized here give reason to doubt the usefulness of identification data in making such predictions. The absence of partisan channeling of the vote in 1984, after all, was not a new phenomenon. It was only a very striking case of what has long been observed of American voters—that they seem to resort less and less to parties as a key to their vote at all.

While direct evidence of this is hard to come by, it is suggestive that over the past five national elections the percentage of voters who reported having voted a "straight ticket" (all Republican or all Democratic) has been a consistent minority, ranging between 37 and 44 percent of the electorate. Also, the percentage of congressional districts choosing representatives of one party and a President of another has risen sharply since the mid-1960s, climbing from just over 26 percent in 1960 to close to 44 percent in 1984. Clearly, most voters do not feel bound by party labels. More and more, it seems, voter responses to questions about identification record little more than the party identity of the candidate they voted for in the last election or intend to vote for in the next.

Against the argument that party identification among

the young has shown a sharp trend toward the Republicans, all of the above can be noted again, with the additional caveat that the political sentiments of young people seem even more volatile than those of the rest of the electorate. One reason that the swing toward the Republican Party among young voters looked so big in 1984 was that they were swinging back from being the age cohort that most strongly endorsed Jimmy Carter in the election of 1980. Recent research suggests that young people also voted disproportionately Republican in the 1920s, just prior to the upsurge in Democratic support during the New Deal. The voting behavior of young people thus does not appear to be a very good predictor of political realignment.

Finally, it seems likely that if the Republicans were making serious strides in identification among voters, weak Democratic identifiers would be likely, especially if specifically invited, to join the Republican Party. But a recent effort to persuade 100,000 Democrats to register Republican, based on just that premise, fizzled embarrassingly; the Republican National Committee had to cover its expensive failure with a blanket of juggled statistics. And, despite an enormous expenditure of resources, the results of Republican registration efforts among non-voters in 1983–1984 were not particularly impressive.

TO MAINTAIN THE VIEW THAT REAGAN'S POLICIES DO not reflect a new popular consensus on policy, of course, one needs an alternative explanation of just how he has managed to win two landslide election victories. But this question has an entirely plausible answer that leads to none of the conclusions drawn by the revisionist Democrats: *the economy*.

We have already noted that Reagan's approval rating has moved in tandem with the economy, and in this he is not exceptional. A huge amount of research confirms that economic performance is an important factor in whether voters approve or disapprove of elected officials, not only in the United States but in most capitalist democracies. Indeed, quite reasonable predictions of Reagan's percentage of the two-party vote in both 1980 and 1984 can be derived from a simple model that considers only changes in real disposable income per capita shortly before an election and a measure of presidential popularity (which correlates closely with economic performance). One widely disseminated model of this type fits the 1984 case almost perfectly, predicting a Reagan percentage of 59.4 percent—only 0.2 percent off the actual result.

Such "political business cycle" models suggest that the recent problems of the Democrats are more cyclical than secular. Above all they are matters of timing. Jimmy Carter pumped up the economy in 1977 and at the beginning of 1978 but then drove it into recession just in time for the 1980 election. He thus became the first President since Herbert Hoover to run for re-election at a moment when the national income was actually shrinking, and the first elected incumbent since Hoover to lose a bid for re-election.

tion. Ronald Reagan did not make this mistake. His Administration chose to have a long and exceptionally deep recession early in its term and then (helped along by the collapse of OPEC and other factors) staged one of the greatest political business cycles in modern history, producing a 5.8 percent increase in real per capita disposable income in 1984—the largest election-year increase since 1936 (see the third chart on page 50). Though one can argue to infinity whether the last few percent of Reagan's vote was or was not produced by this boom, the point is that income growth of this size cannot fail to produce a smashing victory for an incumbent, no matter what the other party does. It is not a reason for the opposition to agonize.

That the economy was the key issue in 1980 and 1984 is also confirmed by survey data. As already noted, virtually all studies of the 1980 election see it as a referendum on Carter's bad economic performance. In 1984 every major election poll found economic issues dominant in voters' minds. More immediately, and of considerable relevance to current plans to move the party to the right, a lack of confidence in the Democrats' program for the economy was the single most important reason, at the level of voting behavior, for the Democrats' defeat.

Consider voter opinion on the "New Deal issues" cited earlier. Contrary to revisionist claims, such issues continued to preoccupy voters in the 1980 and 1984 elections. In 1980, Stanley Kelley reports, New Deal issues were salient among 76 percent of the electorate; in 1984 their salience actually increased to 84 percent. In 1980, however, the Democratic bias on the composite of New Deal issues fell to 47 percent, some 16 points below its 1976 level, and in 1984 it recovered only to 53 percent. Thus if those elections had turned solely on New Deal issues, the Democrats would have lost resoundingly in 1980 and won only a narrow victory in 1984.

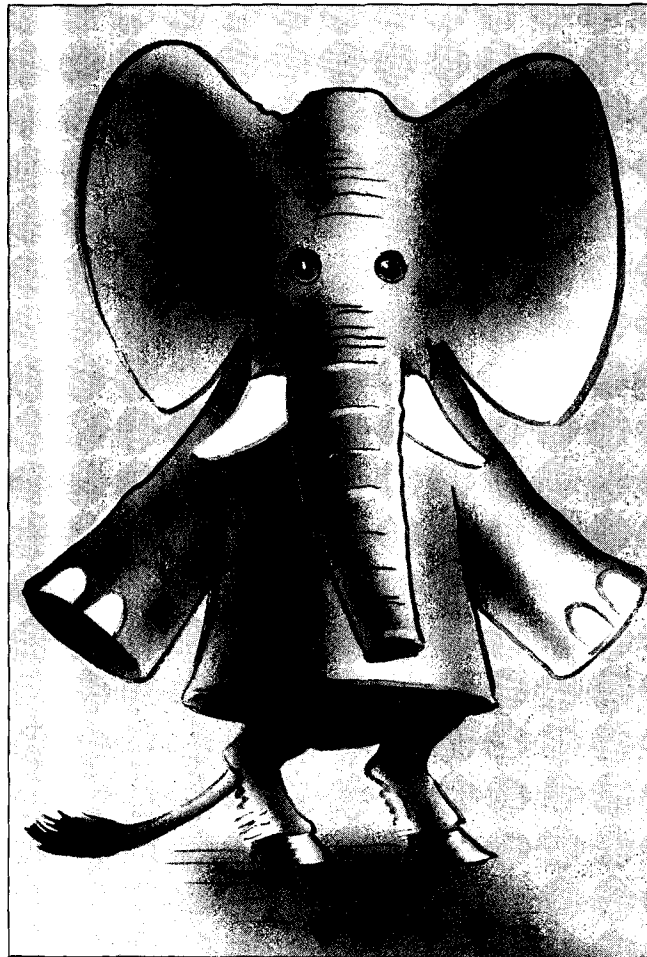
This drop-off in Democratic bias on New Deal issues had nothing to do with changed public perceptions of Democratic positions on such issues as Social Security, worker protection, assistance to the aged, medical care, or labor unions. On all those issues, in fact, the Democratic bias actually *increased* from 1976 to 1984. What changed

was voter perception of the Democrats as macroeconomic managers.

Of concern to voters in all presidential elections during the period 1952–1984 was the election's expected impact on the economy (including the impact on employment, wages, salaries, working conditions, and inflation). This classic New Deal issue had an average salience of 25 percent over the period 1952–1976, and in those years the Democratic bias on the issue averaged an impressive 72 percent. In 1980 and 1984, however, two things happened. First, the issue became even more salient, rising to 32 percent in 1980 and 33 percent in 1984. Second, and

most dramatic, the Democratic bias plunged to 20 percent in 1980 and recovered only to 29 percent in 1984. This whopping 47 percent drop between the average bias during the period 1952–1976 and that during 1980–1984, more than any other factor, explains voter rejection of Democrats at the polls. Significantly, it coincided with the party's move away from its traditional commitment to promoting employment gains and growth.

Such data point up the implausibility of the revisionist case as an electoral strategy. They suggest, indeed, that a move to the right may be the *worst* possible electoral move the Democrats could make, and that the mistake the Democrats made in 1984 was not their alleged "reaching down"—that is, their efforts to expand the electorate through voter-registration

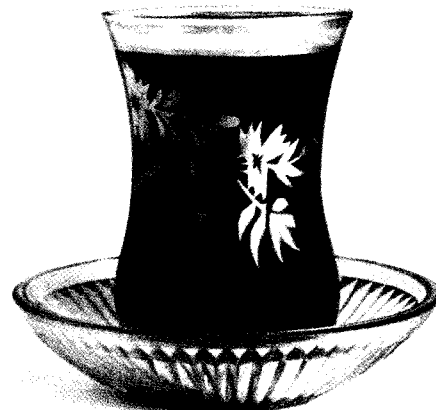


drives—but the fact that they did not reach down nearly enough. On economic issues the Democrats offered voters almost nothing in 1984. Walter Mondale became the first Democratic nominee in many years to fail even to put forward a major jobs program. Nor did he couple his call for tax increases with a program of economic revitalization. There is no particular mystery as to why voters, faced with a choice between someone who promised them little besides a rise in taxes and a candidate who at least verbally championed economic growth and lower taxes, deserted Mondale for Reagan or declined to vote at all. As one looks to 1988, the data suggest that a revisionist Democrat even more grimly committed to lowering expectations will be abandoned by the voters in even greater numbers. □

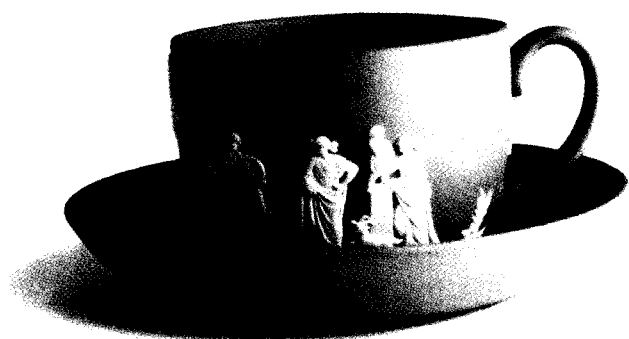
Whatever your cup c



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A Short Story



THE WHITE ROOSTER

BY ROBERT BAUSCH

THE WHITE ROOSTER LIMPED INTO MORGAN HUFF'S perfect yard on a Saturday in June. The rooster could not have come from any place Morgan knew of. He and his wife, Sarah, lived alone in what most people would call a suburb. They were far from the city, and land tended to be parceled out in larger and larger plots; somebody might have enough property to try and raise a few chickens, but Morgan and his wife were miles from anybody's farm.

"We got a rooster," he said.

Sarah, who kept the house nearly as clean as Morgan kept the yard, came out to see. "I thought you were kidding," she said.

The rooster had a wounded foot, and it moved along the ground like a turtle. "Probably some kid's pet," Morgan said.

"What do we do with it?"

It waddled under the back porch, disappeared in the dark under there like a spirit.

"I guess we should feed it." Morgan went into the house and got a box of puffed wheat.

"He won't eat that," Sarah said. She knelt down at the foot of the back-porch stairs, tried to get a closer look at the rooster. "He's gone way back there."

Morgan got down next to his wife. Getting himself adjusted there in the grass was difficult, because of the tenderness in his knees. He squinted, and back in the darkness, near the brick foundation of the house, he could see the faded white rooster sitting very still. "He's going to be a problem."

"Get up," Sarah said. "You know you shouldn't."

"It's not that bad." Morgan struggled to his feet. "I'll take some aspirin."

Sarah rose in front of him. He watched the way her hair collected the sunlight and transformed it into a thing silver and fine. She looked at him and then at the box of puffed wheat in his hand.

"Well, I guess we can try this," she said.

"I don't know what else he might eat. Crackers, maybe."

"He won't eat crackers."

"He's going to be a problem."

"Well, we'll—we'll help him, maybe."

"I don't want it there. It'll die, and then I won't be able to get it out."

She opened the box of cereal. He noticed her hands

tremble slightly, and looked away from her to the back of the yard and an old abandoned church that rested behind the trees just off their property. The white steeple of the church jutted out of the green trees like a bone.

"He's not paying any attention to the food," Sarah said. She was on her knees again, throwing puffed wheat back under the porch.

"Just leave a bunch of it there."

"That's what I'm doing."

"Maybe he'll eat it when we're not bothering him," Morgan said.

She sat back on her haunches and dug deep into the box. "Poor thing."

"It's just going to be trouble," Morgan said. "I know that."

"Maybe we can nurse him back to health and then take him somewhere."

"Just trouble," Morgan said again. "That's all it's going to be."

TROUBLE CAME THE FOLLOWING WEEK, WHEN MORGAN'S son, his only child, returned from California with his third wife. Morgan had loved the first wife and had never met the second one.

"Oh, no," Ernie said. "This isn't Emily."

"Emily," Morgan said. Sarah kept hugging Ernie, crying on his shoulder. The new wife said, "My name is June." It rhymed with *toupee*.

Morgan felt his stomach shrink a little and tried to keep the blood from his face. "June," he said.

"Right," Ernie said.

"Not Emily."

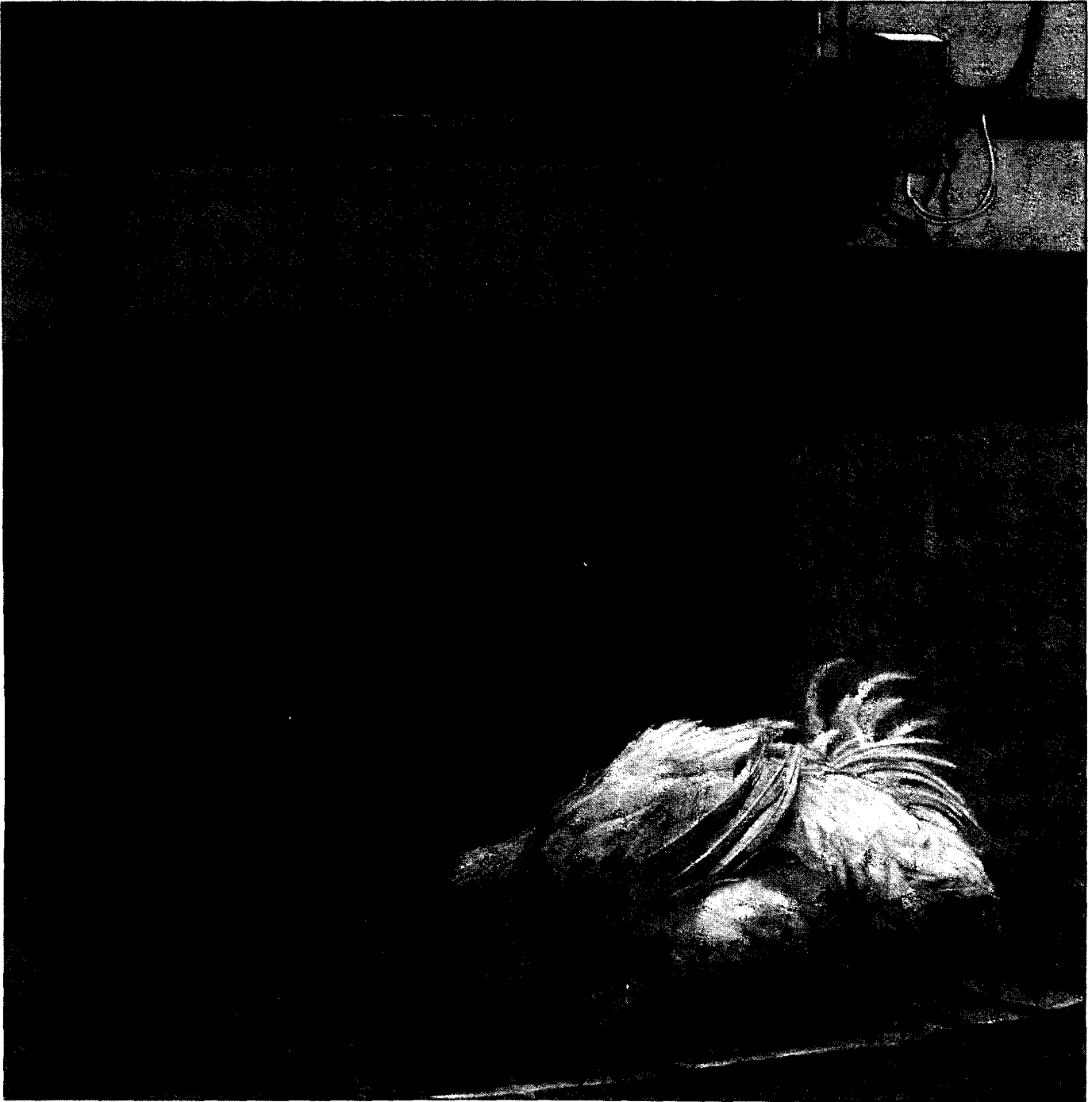
Ernie looked at June and said, "Emily was my second wife."

"I know," she said. Her hand came up to his neck and rested on his chest, just under the open collar of his shirt. Sarah held on to the other side of him.

"One wife's enough for most," Morgan said.

"I've only got one wife."

Sarah frowned at Morgan. He looked at June and tried to smile. Although she had lipstick lining her front teeth, her face was not overly made up. Her hair, light brown, seemed at once completely arranged and in disarray—almost as if it were a globe, with a gorgeous, smooth surface and the thinnest outline of satellites spinning around it.



She wore a red blouse, open in the front and cut low enough to show a small brown mole on her left breast at the place where it became a part of her chest. She stood next to Ernie like a soul that had just stepped lightly out of his body.

Sarah cried.

"Mom," Ernie said.

"I think it's cute," Junee said.

All four of them stood in the foyer, the door wide open. Ernie had arrived without any warning, and Morgan was struck by how powerful the open door was. Before anyone had knocked on it, before Morgan had opened it, his life had been an orderly thing. Now the door felt like a wound.

"We shouldn't just stand here," Sarah said, wiping her eyes.

Morgan couldn't look at anyone. He started to move back into the room.

"I have to get my things," Ernie said.

He went past Morgan, touching him on the arm. "Glad to see you, Dad."

Sarah begged Morgan with her eyes.

"Oh, yes," he said. But Ernie was already outside.

Junee talked loudly about meeting the family. "Ernie's told me *so* much about you." It might have been true.

"Shouldn't you see if he needs some help?" Sarah said to Morgan.

"How long is he staying?" Morgan said. Junee took a deep breath and looked around the room, an odd sort of smile on her face. It was quiet for a moment.

"He might need some help," Sarah said again. She would not look Morgan in the eyes.

"He can't stay too long," Morgan said, but he went out to help Ernie anyway.



"Ooooo, he's so cute," Junee said. She lay on her stomach, at the foot of the steps, looking at the rooster. Ernie sat in a lawn chair behind her, smoking a cigar. He wore plaid bermuda shorts, a T-shirt that said I LIKE REGGAE on the front, and black sandals. His hair was nearly gone on top; it looked like the thin black hair on his legs. Sarah sat to the side on the porch steps, facing Junee, and Morgan stood behind her, on the porch. He did not want to sit down, because he would have to bend his knees.

"Geez," Ernie said. "What a pet he'll make."

"How do you know it's a he?" Junee turned her body to look at Ernie, and when she did this, Morgan saw the curve of her breasts.

"It's a rooster, for Christ's sake," Morgan said.

Ernie looked sullenly toward the back of the yard and the church. No one said anything. Junee got to her knees and then moved over in front of her husband.

"Going to be hot this afternoon," Sarah said.

"Still there," Ernie said to himself.

"What?" Junee had her arms folded across his lap now. She looked up at him as if he were Jesus and she had just washed his feet.

"The church."

"They'll tear it down someday and build townhouses," Sarah said.

"It's really kind of beautiful," Junee said.

"The yard looks wonderful," Ernie said. He wasn't looking at anyone, but he spoke loudly, throwing his voice to the porch.

"It's the one thing that keeps us busy," Sarah said.

Morgan studied the steeple of the church and tried not to listen. He was suddenly conscious of all the noises of his quiet neighborhood—distant lawn mowers, passing cars, and the slight, almost human whine of cicadas and crickets. He thought of all the hours, the thousands of hours,

without Ernie, and of the first time he had realized the loss.

"Poor thing," Junee was saying. "He's moving."

Sarah got down to see. "I feed him three times a day, but he doesn't seem to get any better."

"Is he coming out?" Ernie puffed on his cigar.

"No. Just sort of . . ." Junee said.

"He's trying to put his head under—he's hiding under his wings," Sarah said.

"So, when did you divorce Emily?"

It was suddenly very quiet. Junee traced a pattern on her thigh with a fingernail. Ernie sat there shaking his head, puffing on the cigar.

Sarah struggled to her feet and came up the steps toward Morgan as if he had just pushed her down and she was coming back for more. "We've got plenty of time to get caught up on all the news."

He could not look into her fierce eyes.

"Let's leave our guests . . ." She paused. "Let's leave Ernie and Junee alone until they feel more at home."

"I didn't divorce Emily," Ernie said. "She divorced me."

Junee patted Ernie's knee.

"You might have . . ." Morgan felt Sarah's hand on his arm.

"Please," she said.

"I guess it's more than news, isn't it?" Morgan said. "A person gets divorced and doesn't even . . ."

"It was a hell of a long time ago," Ernie did not look at his father. "I've already forgotten it."

Junee turned around, wrapped her arms around her knees, rested her head on her arms, and seemed to study the ground in front of her. It was an emphatic gesture, like the movement of a dancer—a physical sentence that seemed to say, "This is enough."

"I'm sorry if he's made you uncomfortable," Sarah said.

"I'm right here," Morgan said. "Don't talk about me as if I wasn't."

"I'm not uncomfortable," Junee said. "It's just . . . I hate to see . . ."

"We won't stay too long," Ernie said.

"How long?" Morgan felt as though his bones gave off heat. He could not forget all the hours without Ernie—hours without even a memory of him.

"You know, Dad . . ." Ernie turned the cigar in his mouth as he talked, still gazing toward the back of the yard and the white tower rising through the green canopy of trees. "Even when it rains—even when there doesn't seem to be a sun up there . . ."

"Oh, I think the rooster is trying to eat," Junee said. She peered under the porch as if her life depended on some slight tremor there. Ernie put his hand on her head and stroked her fine hair.

Sarah went back down the steps and got to her knees next to Junee. "I hope he's getting better."

"What about the sun?" Morgan said.

"It's up there, no matter what," Ernie said. For the first time, he looked at Morgan, and the old man had a brief, almost palpable sensation in the center of his heart—a

feeling that he was watching his own face in a mirror and it had spoken to him from his own far-lost youth.

"The rooster *is* eating," Sarah said.

"The poor thing," June said. "He's so weak."

"We're *all* weak," Ernie said.

Sarah sat up and rested her hands on her thighs, her legs tucked under her. Morgan thought she looked like a young girl for a moment, but then he realized that the bright and tender sunlight was casting shadows around her, stirring memories like clear water. "You two never talk *to* each other," she was saying. "Why don't you just talk *to* each other."

"We're talking," Ernie said.

"Why don't you just sit face to face and look at one another?"

"That's a good idea," June said.

"I don't have anything to say," Morgan said.

"I've got three weeks," Ernie held the cigar in front of him, between the tips of his fingers, and seemed to concentrate on the thin, blue line of smoke as it curled up into the sunlight. "What is that—five hundred hours or so? I'll probably sleep half that time, so what are we talking about? Two hundred fifty hours, maybe?"

"I don't have anything I want to say. I don't—" Morgan tried not to see his son.

"For God's sake," Sarah said.

"Two hundred fifty hours," Ernie said, and Morgan felt his son's black eyes as if they were lasers, piercing his flesh.

"How many hours in nine years?" Morgan said.

"It's still up there, Dad," Ernie said, dropping his cigar in the bright grass. "Even when it rains."

LATER IN THE AFTERNOON, WHILE ERNIE AND JUNE slept upstairs, and while Sarah clattered pans in the kitchen, getting supper, Morgan walked around the perimeter of his yard, thinking about his life as if it were a dream that had no pattern, no logic. He had come to this green lawn in a slow dropping-down of time, almost as if he had been lowered into it by something that held him suspended, in harness. And yet his descent seemed sudden to him. One day he discovered that he loved this space of ground, he needed it. He woke to it and looked at it like a lover each white morning. Nothing outside its perfect fence mattered to him. The world beyond was tattered, broken, without color.

Ernie was beyond the fence, seemed always beyond it. He had moved to California with his first wife, and after ten years of late-night phone calls and brief weekend visits he just seemed to dissolve into Morgan's distant past. The phone calls stopped. So did the visits. When Sarah called, Ernie would say she had chosen the wrong time—or she got no answer at all. Then Julia, his first wife, wrote that Ernie had "strayed." She said her heart was broken.

"What's going on out there?" Morgan said when he got Julia on the phone.

But she couldn't say it. She wept, like a victim. Morgan did not know what to do with the telephone. He held it out, away from his body, afraid her grief would somehow escape from it, filter into his own heart. When he finally put the receiver back to his ear, he heard that siren-like whine that the phone makes when the line has gone dead.

Sarah talked of going out there—of straightening out everything between Ernie and Julia. "It's probably just one of those tough times—a crisis," she said.

A few weeks after that came the letter from Ernie. It was typed on his office stationery, and even now Morgan could not let what it said out of his mind. "I am not Catholic anymore. Julia has tried to commit suicide." Those two sentences twisted a sinew in Morgan's soul, made something turn over like a corpse in his memory. The letter went on—seemed to give off the whining sound of Ernie's voice. He talked skeptically of a "personal God," of the impossibility of such a thing. "There is no God," he said. He did not believe in anything after death, and so felt "compelled to make this life what I want it to be." He said he loved a new woman, named Emily, and he could not live without her. "My whole life would be dead."

And now Emily, too, was gone.

That was nine years ago. Julia died in the hospital, her body flown home in a metal casket like a casualty of war. Morgan took Sarah to the funeral and felt as if he were mourning a murder victim. "These things happen," someone said. "It's nobody's fault. She just couldn't take the loss." Yes, Morgan thought, she could not live without Ernie. And what had his son to do with her death?

"There's two ways to look at it," Father Burns, the parish priest, said. He was nearly as old as Morgan. He was a kind, sad man who always looked as if he'd been left out of something—as if someone had thrown a party and no one had told him about it. "We each have free will, and this young girl chose to die."

"Yes, but why?" Morgan said.

"The other way, the other way of looking at it"—he stopped, moved some envelopes on his desk. "The other way is not so pleasant to contemplate."

"If Ernie hadn't left her, she'd still be alive."

"Yes."

"So which is true?"

"I guess they're both true."

"My son killed her."

The priest shook his head, but he didn't say anything. He clearly believed it too.

When Morgan left the rectory, he found Sarah crying in the car.

"He killed her," Morgan said, when he was behind the wheel.

"That's what Father Burns said?"

"He killed her the same as if he'd held the gun."

"Don't," Sarah said. "Stop the car."

"Why?"

"I want to talk to Father Burns. I want to hear him say it." She wept as if she were afraid someone might hear her.

"He didn't have to say it," Morgan told her. "It's true. Christ, I loved that little girl."

"Think how Ernie must feel."

"What happened to him?" Morgan thought he might lose his sight, thought his eyes might evaporate. "Jesus, I haven't cried since I was fifteen."

No more letters came from Ernie. Each day, for months afterward, the mailbox took on almost spiritual force—as if it were a mouth that might pronounce a death sentence. But it produced nothing. And Morgan gave up the memory of his son in the same way a serpent emerges from its skin: he basked in the summer sun of his immaculate back yard, and by the first tentative and silent snow of winter he was no longer anybody's father. He felt cleansed of it—of his son and all the vast memory of him.

"I will never give him up," Sarah told him. She continued to write, sent her small pink envelopes into the great maw of California, but never received an answer. Morgan witnessed the ache of her heart as if it were a wound he had made in her breast. If he had not decided to forget his son, his hatred would have filtered into his bloodstream.

And now here was Ernie, returned home, carrying his bags and this new woman, like a traveling salesman. "What do I do with my hatred now?" Morgan asked himself. He stood at the back of his yard and addressed the white tower of the abandoned church. "What do I do with it now?"

WHEN HE COULD NOT STAND THE HEAT ANYMORE, he went back to the porch and sat in a chair in the shade by the door. He smelled roast beef and steamed carrots from the kitchen, and if he listened for it, he could hear the rooster moving slightly in the dried and dead leaves under the porch.

"It sure is a hot one," a voice behind him said.

He turned and saw Juneé standing behind the screen like a shadow in a dream.

"Yes, isn't it."

There was a pause. Morgan wondered where Sarah was.

"Ernie's still sleeping."

Morgan cleared his throat and stared out into the yard. He suddenly remembered a photograph of Ernie when he was two—a sleeping and innocent child, his tiny hands curled around a purple ring. The incredible change, the disappearance of that child, hit him like an embolism in the center of his chest.

"He works so hard," Juneé said. "He needs this—this vacation."

"I've got nothing against you." Morgan turned back to her and tried to see her face through the black screen. "You understand. It's nothing pers—"

"He needs the rest."

"Sure."

"This is where he wanted to come."

They heard a crackling sound under the porch. "Well, he's getting his rest now, isn't he." He felt his neck beginning to ache, and turned back away from her.

"If you knew how often he speaks of you." Juneé sounded as if she might begin to cry.

"I've got to do something about that rooster," Morgan said.

"Why can't you"—she lowered her voice, seemed intent on sharing some secret. "Why can't you just forgive him?"

Morgan stood up and faced her. He wanted to escape her gaze, get himself to some private place where he would not have to hear a human voice. "Did you know about his first wife?"

Sarah came out of the kitchen behind Juneé. "What are you two whispering about?"

"I've got to do something about that rooster," Morgan said.

"Let it go for now," Sarah said. "It's too hot."

"Well." Morgan didn't know what to say. Juneé stared at him as if he held her at bay with some terrible weapon.

"Besides, I've almost got supper ready." Sarah put her arm around Juneé. "It's so delightful cooking for more than two."

Sarah served the supper with Juneé's help. No one said anything. Morgan did not look up from his plate. He felt as if any sound, even a single syllable from any of them, might cause an explosion. When Morgan was finished, he got up, leaned over Sarah, and said, "It was good." Then he took his plate to the kitchen, rinsed it, and set it in the dishwasher. "I'm going outside," he said. "I've got to get that rooster out while we still have some light."

Sarah came out behind him.

"Finish your supper," he said.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to get it out of there."

"No. I mean about Ernie."

"I'm not going to do anything about him." He could not get to his knees; each time he tried to bend his body, he felt an electrical charge in his joints, and his hands trembled like leaves in a light breeze. "Damn it," he said. "Get me a cushion or something."

"He said he was sorry for not answering my letters." Sarah stood in front of him, took his hands into hers. "Please. Please, Morgan."

"Please what?" He wanted to get away from her, but she held him there with her tears.

"I forgive him," she said. "He's our son, and I forgive him."

"I'm glad."

"He said he was too ashamed, too—"

"Look," Morgan said. He pulled his hands away. "It's between you and him. I've got nothing to do with it."

"Make him welcome," she said.

"Would you get me a cushion? Would you?" He could not explain the sour taste in his mouth, the sense of bitter hatred and anger he felt, at the core of everything, for her. Not for Ernie, or what he had done, but for her, for Sarah.

"You don't have to do that now," she said, reaching for him again.

He stepped back. "No. Leave me—get a cushion. Just do that."

"Honey."

She was old, and he felt that she had drawn him down into it—as if he might still be young if he had not loved her. At that moment he blamed her for the ache in his knees, the stiffness in his back, for all the accumulated decay he recognized each morning of his life. And then when he saw the tears lining her eyes, when he remembered the countless and secret moments of whispered tenderness between them, he felt a sudden, exquisite ache in his heart. He wished he could lift her gently and carry her back to youth, back to fine bright eyes and soft hair.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I'm doing what I can."

"Come inside." She put her arms around him.

"I've got to do something about the rooster."

"Not now."

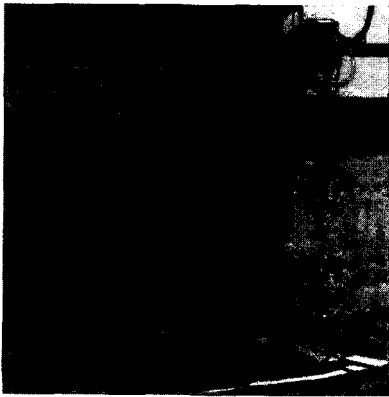
"Look." He took her arms from around his waist as if he were removing a fragile garment. "I can't just go in there and make everything normal. I can't."

"He's back." She was crying again, moving toward him like a spirit—like a relentless ghost.

"I can't. I just can't," Morgan said.

"Just don't—don't be cruel to him."

"I won't." He touched her arm. "I really won't."



WHEN ERNIE AND JUNEES CAME OUT, MORGAN HAD gotten a flashlight so that he could see the rooster under the porch. He squatted down on the cushion Sarah got for him and aimed the light between the steps. The rooster was a white clump of feathers against the gray cinder block of the house.

"Is he alive?" Ernie asked.

"I can't tell," Morgan said. "He won't move." This was merely talk, a sort of gesture to keep everything submerged. He was surprised at the nervous pounding of his heart as he knelt there on the cushion. And suddenly the timbre of Ernie's voice changed—he sounded less tense, almost as if he were basking in his father's praise.

"Why don't you let me do that?" Ernie said.

"I'm all right."

"Maybe we can get a stick or something."

"A stick?" Sarah said. She sat on the porch steps in front of Morgan.

"You know, tie a string to it and try to loop it over the rooster's head."

Morgan put the light out and struggled to his feet. "I guess I don't want to hurt it," he said.

"You got to get it out," Ernie said. "If he dies under there, he'll smell up the whole neighborhood."

"Can you tell if he's eaten any of the food?" Sarah smoothed her dress over her knees. Her voice, too, seemed to have lost some of its tautness.

"There's mountains of chicken shit under there by now," Ernie said. "Did you ever smell—"

"Mountains of what?" Morgan looked at his son directly for the first time.

"Chicken shit." Ernie would not look away.

"It's all right," Sarah said. "My, if I need to be sheltered from such words at my age, I—"

"You say such words in front of your mother?"

"It's okay, hon."

"What's the big deal about chicken shit?" Junees said.

Morgan waved his hand. "Nothing." He moved toward the shed next to the house.

"It's okay," Sarah said again.

"Forget I said anything," Morgan said. He stopped and looked at his wife, and then at the two foreign people standing in his yard, staring at him as if he'd just crawled out of a wrecked car. "Just forget the whole thing."

In the shed he searched for the thin wooden poles that he used to hold up the middle of Sarah's clothesline. He could hear the slight voice of Ernie, and then Junees, and he knew they were talking about him. He had been a carpenter, had spent his entire life building things, and outside the shed, occupying the whole earth with his new wife and his reggae T-shirt, was Morgan's most profound failure. He had seen it as the most important thing he would ever build—a soul, a good soul born of love and destined to join Sarah and him in paradise. A last opportunity for the immortal family. And here he was, fighting tears in his tool shed because he knew that his death would be no more significant or powerful than the tearing down of an old building. At the same instant he realized why he loved his house, his green sculptured lawn: it would be all he would ever know of Eden.

When he emerged from the shed, Ernie was unwinding a ball of twine and Junees and Sarah were gone.

"Where's your mother?"

"They went into the house."

Morgan held the wooden pole out, gauged the distance to the rooster. "This ought to be long enough."

"Here's your loop," Ernie said. He tied the twine to the end of the pole, while Morgan watched him. Ernie's head was tilted to the side, his brows furrowed as he concentrated on the knot, and Morgan felt a rush of memory and pain—an unbelievable surge of worn-out and lost feeling for his son, his lost child. He could not understand why the earth would do this to him.

"There," Ernie said. He tapped the end of the pole. "That ought to be about right."

They stood there in the grass as if they expected the ground to sink suddenly beneath them. Then Ernie said, in a casual, almost polite voice, "Sorry about the chicken-shit thing."

Morgan got to his knees on the cushion and poked the stick back toward the rooster. Ernie knelt next to him and aimed the flashlight so that Morgan could see what he was doing. The rooster ducked its head, trying to avoid the string. Morgan held the stick in his hands and guided it gently, trying not to let the loop touch the ground, so that it would remain open.

"What are you doing?" Sarah said. She stood inside the house at the back door, watching through the screen.

"Getting it out," Ernie said.

Morgan got the loop over its head, and then he dragged it out slowly, so it wouldn't choke. The rooster seemed to bend forward and break like dried cane with each tug Morgan made on the line.

When the rooster was out, Ernie said, "Not much left of him."

"Poor thing," Sarah said.

The rooster sat very still in the hot grass just off the cement slab at the base of the last step, and the twine ran from its neck out into the yard. Its white coat of feathers was thin and wet. The base of each feather was visible, so that it looked as if the rooster had feathers sticking into it instead of growing out of it, and Morgan saw patches where there were no feathers at all, the white, bumpy skin showing through. The rooster waited there in the late sun like a horse for its rider, blinking its eyes—first one, then the other—absurdly against the light.

"He's either very old or very sick," Ernie said.

Sarah came out and down the steps for a closer look. She bent over and very gently brushed her hand on the rooster's back. It didn't move except to lift its head slightly. A little swirl of steam filtered out of its mouth. It might have been a soul. Sarah stroked the rooster, kneeling now with her hand resting lightly on the white feathers, and Morgan said, "It's not a pet, for Christ's sake."

The rooster moved forward, toward the back of the house, and then stopped again. Its wings were stretched out and down to the ground, bent at the tips and spread out like dry, white leaves of palm.

Ernie stepped on the twine that trailed behind it.

"It's not going anywhere," Morgan said.

Junee came out, fairly singing with excitement when she saw the rooster. "You got him out, you got him out."

Sarah stood next to Morgan. "I think we should take it to a vet."

Junee said, "Oh, the poor thing."

"It's just a rooster," Morgan said. "You might have had chicken tonight for supper."

The rooster's eyes looked like tiny beads of water leaking from white driftwood.

"It won't make it past tonight," Ernie said.

"Oh, no," Junee said. She went to Ernie, as if he might need her to face the terrible news.

"I think we should try," Sarah said. "We should try something."

"It's just a rooster."

"It's a living thing," Junee said.

"So's a maggot," Morgan said. "Horseflies, mosquitoes."

Junee would not look at him. She put her head against Ernie's shoulder and seemed to concentrate on the rooster.

Sarah said, "If he's suffering, we should do something."

"What do you want to do?" Morgan did not feel sad anymore. He felt cornered.

"Take it to a vet."

"And pay sixty, seventy dollars—maybe more? Then what?"

Sarah looked at Junee and then back to the rooster.

"Then what?" Morgan said. "We still got the rooster."

"Maybe not," Ernie said. "Maybe the vet will put it to sleep."

"Awww." Junee hugged Ernie's arm. "I hope not."

"Why don't you tell her it's just a rooster?" Morgan said.

Ernie waved his hand, as if he were discarding a cigarette. "You want me to take it to the vet, Mom?" Sarah looked at Morgan with tears in her eyes, and he felt accused by them. She moved to the porch and started up the steps as if she were trying to escape something behind her.

"What's the matter with you?" Morgan said. He could feel Ernie's eyes on him, so he watched the grass at his feet, and then the rooster. "Women," he said.

Junee kissed Ernie on the cheek and followed Sarah inside. Ernie walked over and picked up the rooster. It was limp in his arms, like a bag of white water.

"What are you doing?" Morgan said.

"Junee's going to get the name and address of a vet."

"You paying for it?"

"This animal is suffering," Ernie said.

Morgan could not help himself. He said, "And you wouldn't want anybody to suffer. Not like your mother. Oh, no."

"Okay," Ernie said.

"All those letters. And Julia. My goodness, suffering's a thing to avoid, isn't it? You wouldn't want *anything* to suffer."

"Okay, okay," Ernie said. He put the rooster down at his feet. "I've had enough. Do what you want with it."

"Go in the house and get a plastic trash bag."

"What for?"

"I'm going to take care of the rooster."

"Get it yourself," Ernie said.

THIS WAS LIKE A DREAM—A VIVID, HOT DREAM THAT he could control completely. While Ernie watched, his arms folded in front of him, Morgan placed the rooster in a green plastic bag and tied it closed with a yellow twist tie. Then he took it around the house to the driveway.

Sarah and Junee were in the house.

The sun was beginning its descent, and the hot air moved in short whisks through the trees. Morgan placed the end of the bag on the exhaust pipe of his black Ford and then retied the wire tightly around the pipe.

The rooster was quiet. It disappeared into the bag, almost as if it weren't there.

Morgan walked around and started the car.

When he got out, he saw Ernie running toward the bag. "Leave it alone."

The bag expanded like a balloon. "Jesus," Ernie said.

The wrinkles in the green plastic disappeared as it tightened with the exhaust from the car. The sun shone through the bag, and Morgan could see the dark green shadow of the rooster, not moving, while an acrid cloud of light-green smoke filtered down on it. He heard no sound except for the mumble of the car.

"You'd better poke a hole in the bag," Ernie said.

The bag stretched and began to form thin places that let in more light.

Ernie leaned down and tried to poke a hole in the bag with a pocket knife. He touched the green plastic to steady it, to hold it in place, because the bag had begun to move back and forth on the ground. "Jesus," he said. "That thing's hot as hell."

The bag moved in quick, short bursts of energy, thrashing and thudding against the rear bumper of the car.

"Do something," Ernie said.

Morgan heard Sarah call to him from the bedroom window. Just as her voice stopped, at the second the sound of it passed him, Morgan heard a scream.

"Good God," Ernie said.

The rooster screamed again. The sound was almost human, and it made Morgan remember death. It seemed to him the horrifying cry of the last living creature on earth.

"Turn it off—stop it," Ernie said.

Morgan watched the bag.

"This is crazy," Ernie said. "I'm going in the—"

The bag burst open and the rooster came out. It came out, its neck stretched out, its feathers thin and white, arrayed like fish bones. It crawled desperately a few feet, its orange beak gaped wide, and then settled in the grass just off the driveway, blinked one lonely eye, and stopped moving.

Morgan turned away from it.

"What happened?" Sarah called from the house.

Ernie walked up to her window and mumbled something to her. For a moment everything was quiet, and then the sound of the car came swimming back—the engine breathing now, a piece of the torn plastic flapping off the end of the pipe like a tiny flag.

Ernie went around the front of the car, reached in the driver's window, and shut off the engine. He stood up and looked at Morgan with knowing, almost prescient eyes. "Well, now you don't have the rooster anymore."

"Right."

Ernie shook his head and put his hands in his pockets. "We should have found a better way to kill him."

"Isn't this something?" Morgan said. He found himself crying, standing over the dead rooster. "Isn't this the damndest thing?"

He felt Ernie move toward him, heard the crunch of his shoes on the gravel. He could not stand still—he was almost afraid of his own son. "No, you—go get a shovel."

He reached out with his foot and moved the rooster onto what was left of the bag. Everything seemed distorted to him—he seemed to be wearing stained-glass spectacles. He didn't know where Ernie was, and then he felt his son's hand on his shoulder. "Go on, get me a shovel."

"What's the matter, Dad?"

"Get me a shovel. Will—will you do that?" He did not want Ernie to see his face, but looking at the ground—at the gravel driveway, the grass with the white rooster lying there—made him profoundly sad and sick. And he could not break out of this garment of weeping that seemed to tighten on him like a tourniquet and cut off blood and air.

"We'll go," Ernie said. "Junee and I will leave in the morning."

"No. No, you don't understand."

"I never should have come."

Morgan waved him away—moved his arm up as if he were shrugging off some enormous weight. "You can stay."

"I'm sorry, Dad."

"Yeah." Morgan wiped his eyes, started to gain control of it. "Get me a shovel."

"I thought maybe"—Ernie stopped and seemed to swallow something. "I guess I don't know what I thought."

"You should stay."

"I'm getting old, Dad. You know?"

"Your mother—"

"It's just that I'm happy now. You see? I'm—"

"Yeah." Morgan removed a handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his face.

"I'm happy, Dad."

"Your mother—she'll be happy if you stay. If you stay, she'll be happy."

"Okay."

"It doesn't matter to me."

"Sure."

"You hear me? It doesn't matter."

"I hear you."

A sudden hot breeze rose up and pushed the tops of the trees, stirred the feathers of the rooster.

"I guess I'll—I'll go get the shovel," Ernie said.

"It's in the shed." Morgan watched him cross the yard. In the weak light of the evening Ernie moved through the blue shade like an apparition, and when he had disappeared around the house, Morgan said to himself, "It just doesn't matter." He knew that when he went to bed that night, when all the colors died, he would try to escape once again, in brief black sleep, the memory, the certainty, that he had never saved his son from anything. And for a reason he did not understand, he discovered that he was humming an idle, lost song, while, still in tears, he wrapped the white rooster in the torn plastic. □

*Blacks occupy more
management positions in the
military than in any other sector
of American society*

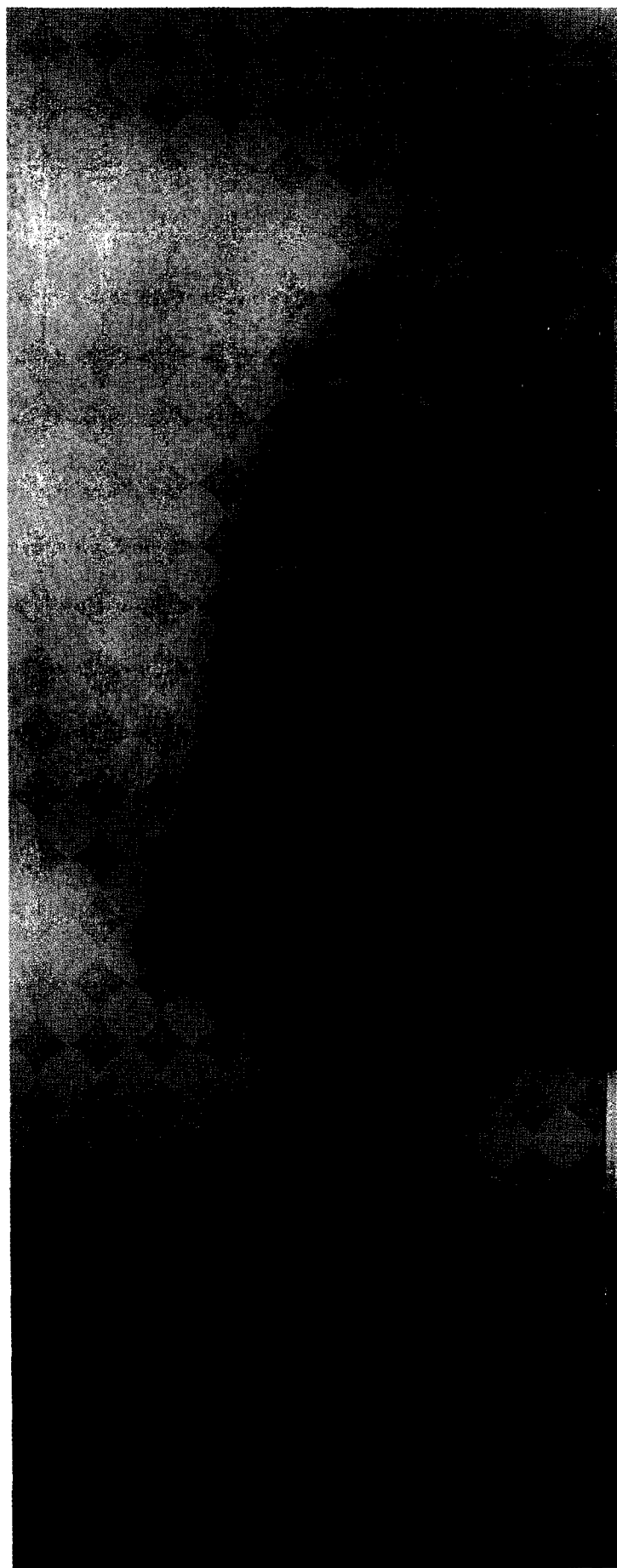
SUCCESS STORY: BLACKS IN THE ARMY

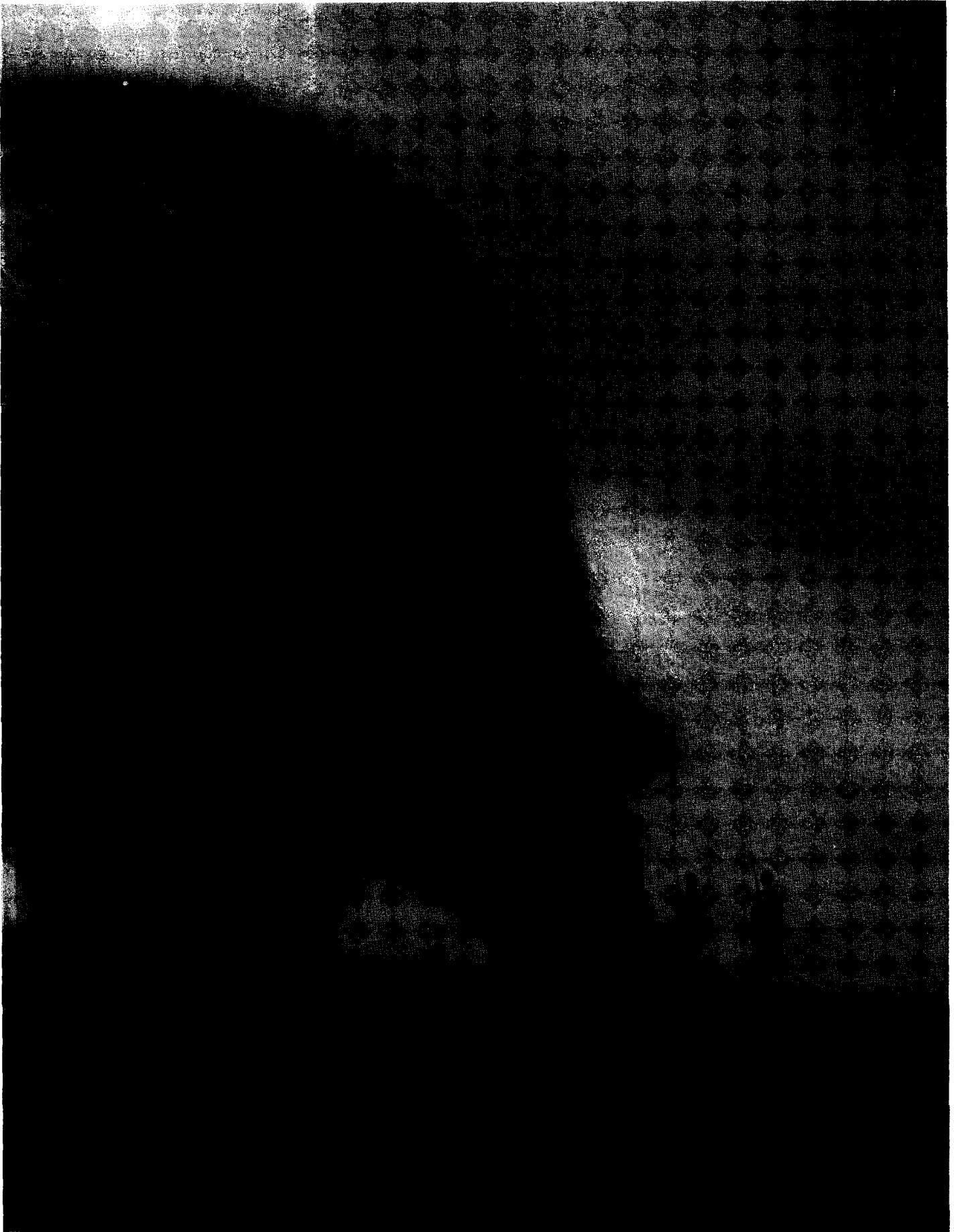
BY CHARLES C. MOSKOS

THE BANQUET FOR BLACK OFFICERS OF FLAG RANK fairly glittered with stars. Seventy-six black generals and admirals—active, reserve, and retired—were being honored at the National Guard Armory in Washington, D.C. The date was February 26, 1982. More than two thousand people were present. The secretary of defense, Caspar Weinberger, gave the principal address. Perhaps predictably, the banquet received little attention in the national media. Surprisingly, however, it also received little attention in the black press.

The absence of coverage was noteworthy because the record of the U.S. military in race relations is one that deserves recognition. Some 400,000 blacks serve in an active-duty force of 2.1 million. Most of these men and women serve in the enlisted ranks, many as noncommissioned officers, or NCOs, and an increasing number can be found in the officer corps. Blacks occupy more management positions in the military than they do in business, education, journalism, government, or any other significant sector of American society. The armed services still have race problems, but these are minimal compared with the problems that exist in other institutions, public and private.

A visitor to a military installation will witness a degree and a quality of racial integration that are rarely encountered elsewhere. At many points in their terms of military service whites are sure to be commanded by black superiors. In the performance of their military duties blacks and whites typically work together with little display of racial animosity. Not only do whites and blacks inhabit the same barracks but also equal treatment is the rule in such non-duty facilities as chapels, barbershops, post exchanges, movie theaters, snack bars, and swimming pools. Observation of any dining facility (as the mess hall has been renamed) reveals little informal racial separation. A rule of thumb is that the more military the environment, the more





effective the integration. Interracial comity is stronger in the field than in the garrison, stronger on duty than off, and stronger on post than in the world beyond the base.

By the fall of 1985 blacks accounted for 13 percent of enlisted personnel in the Navy, 17 percent in the Air Force, 20 percent in the Marine Corps, and 30 percent in the Army. Each branch of the military has a distinctive history and reputation with respect to blacks. Of the four services the Navy has been the slowest to recruit large numbers of blacks (although today it recruits actively). The Army has always been at the forefront. Ten percent of its officers today are black, a proportion twice that for the Air Force and Marine Corps and three times that for the Navy. The Army, with some 776,000 men and women on active duty, is by far the largest of the armed services. In terms of what blacks have achieved in uniform and the difficulties they still face, the Army is a bellwether for the military as a whole.

Military sociology is a small academic specialty, most of whose practitioners, like me, are white. My research has allowed me to observe at close hand the variable progress of race relations in the Army for three decades. The title of my first published journal article, written in 1957, when I was a draftee, was "Has the Army Killed Jim Crow?" My answer at the time was Yes. It was clear, however, that the end of overt segregation in the armed forces had not spelled the end of discrimination. The persistence of subtle forms of racism in an otherwise completely integrated setting defines to this day the experience of blacks in the military. Yet there is no question that on the whole the military has served blacks well, just as blacks have served the military well. The story of blacks in the military is instructive. So is the fact that it has received little attention.

The account that follows is based on my own observations of Army units in the United States and in Europe and on numerous interviews with blacks of every rank, including a half dozen black generals whom I have known for many years. Because the military personnel I spoke with asked not to be identified, I have used pseudonyms.

SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION MAY BE USEFUL. IN 1948 President Harry S. Truman abolished racial segregation in the armed services by executive order. Starting with the Korean War, in 1950, integration proceeded rapidly: first at training bases in the United States, then in combat units in Korea, and finally at U.S. military installations around the world. Racial integration in the Army was accomplished with striking speed (the process took only five years) and thoroughness, at least on a formal level. By the mid-1950s a snapshot of a hundred enlisted men on parade would have shown, say, twelve black faces; integration was a fact of life. At a time when blacks were still arguing for their educational rights before the Supreme Court and marching for their social and political rights in the Deep South, the Army accomplished integra-

tion with little outcry—but not without cost. It almost surely lost support from some of its traditional conservative allies, yet it did not gain support from liberal groups.

One reason that integration went so smoothly was that at first it affected enlisted men almost exclusively, and enlisted men of every race, as the saying went, had always been treated "like Negroes." There were few black officers in the Army during the 1950s, so integration required only relatively minor adjustments on the part of the command structure; resistance to greater change might have been intense. If the paucity of black officers (they would make up less than three percent of all Army officers until the Vietnam era) helped to facilitate integration, it was also one obvious indication that racial prejudice in the armed services remained a force to contend with.

The main reason that integration succeeded in the military has to do with the special nature of military life. Orders, once given, must be followed, whatever a soldier's private feelings or misgivings. Those who cannot adapt to Army life generally either fail to re-enlist or are weeded out. Thus once the decision to desegregate the military was made, it was final. There was no turning back, no recourse to delays, no catering to racist sentiments. From that time on, no known racist could expect to occupy a position of authority in the military hierarchy.

The integration of the military has taken place in three phases. From the Pentagon's point of view the 1950s and early 1960s—phase one—represented a quiet period in race relations. The increasing activism of the civil-rights movement, coupled with the widening of the Vietnam War, led to turbulent change. Truman's executive order had brought blacks partway into the military mainstream; the upheavals of the mid- and late 1960s provided the impetus for some measure of real equality.

Many factors and events coincided to initiate phase two. If integration was the rule on base, beyond the gates discrimination was blatant, especially in the South. Blacks were no longer disposed to accept such treatment. Where, moreover, was the black officer corps? The black draftees of the 1950s were fast becoming NCOs—the backbone of the Army—but as late as 1968 only 0.7 percent of the new class of plebes at West Point were black. Racial prejudice of some sort, blacks contended, was to blame. The Vietnam War heightened racial polarization. While many black leaders, notably Martin Luther King, Jr., denounced the war, the antiwar movement was led mainly by whites. Middle-class whites were the most adept at avoiding the draft, legally and illegally. Perhaps the most emotional issue of all—and one that politicians white and black still bring up—was the contention that black troops were used as "cannon fodder" in the field.

This charge, as it happens, is unfair. Black fatalities amounted to 12.1 percent of all Americans killed in Southeast Asia—a figure roughly proportional to the number of blacks in the U.S. population. But the other issues raised by blacks, inside and outside the military, were obviously legitimate. The war years were marked by well-publicized

breakdowns of discipline among black servicemen and, more broadly, by an atmosphere of racial hostility in the ranks. Racial clashes occurred in Vietnam, on military bases around the world, and on ships at sea. All of this must be seen in context, however. In the waning years of the war the Army was unraveling in more respects than racial ones.

Racial tensions subsided as the war wound down, and the military took a hard look at its procedures. Several steps were taken to improve relations between blacks and whites. Most visibly, courses in black history and the dynamics of racial prejudice became an integral part of every soldier's basic training. How much good this accomplished is impossible to say. Some soldiers—black and white—derided such efforts as attempts at “black pacification.” And junior black officers were often shunted into race-relations slots (to teach the courses and serve as equal-opportunity officers) and thus were unable to pursue careers in other, non-race-related arenas of military service. Many senior officers retiring today do so with a heavy conscience, knowing that they did not do all they might have to save the careers of young black officers who were thrown into the breach.

More important for blacks than the new race-relations curriculum was the revision of the efficiency report, a performance evaluation that carries a lot of weight in all promotions. Starting in the early 1970s a new category appeared in the efficiency reports for officers and NCOs: race-relations skills. Filling out this section was mandatory, and the requirement was rigorously enforced. More blacks received promotions. Some officers with a poor record on race were relieved of command. All of this helped to set a tone. If only for reasons of self-interest, Army officers and NCOs became highly sensitive to the issue of race. Today one is more likely to hear racial jokes in a faculty club than in an officers' club. And in an officers' club one will surely see more blacks.

The end of the draft, in 1973, ushered in phase three. With the advent of the volunteer military, the white middle-class soldier became something of an endangered species. The military, armed with bonuses and the prospect of good pay, began recruiting at the margin. The citizen-soldier was replaced by Economic Man. For poor blacks and poor whites there was simply nothing like the Army. In the last year of the draft blacks made up about 17 percent of the enlisted force. By the early 1980s the proportion had nearly doubled. The qualitative improvement in the Army's race relations was thus accompanied by a major demographic shift. The appointment in 1977 of Clifford Alexander, a black, as the secretary of the Army seemed to ratify what was occurring at all levels in that branch of the service. Even today, in a Republican Administration not known for its openness to blacks, the Department of the Army remains an exception. Two of its five assistant secretaries are black: Delbert R. Spurlock, for manpower and reserve affairs, and John L. Shannon, for installations and logistics.

THE ARMY'S ENLISTED MEN, THREE OUT OF TEN OF whom today are black, will continue to come disproportionately from the pool of young blacks as long as opportunities for these youths remain limited in other occupations. But blacks are not only being pushed into the Army; they are also being pulled. In recent years several factors have made a spell in the Army increasingly attractive: a more positive image of military life as the memory of Vietnam recedes, a vastly improved recruiting command, the availability (since 1982) of GI Bill-style educational benefits, and the generous pay earned by new recruits. A buck private receives a base pay of \$7,668 a year, in addition to room and board, medical care, pension, and other benefits. He may receive an enlistment bonus of up to \$8,000.

A 1982 study published by Martin Binkin and Mark J. Eitelberg, of the Brookings Institution, showed that an astonishing 42 percent of all qualified black youths enter the military, whereas 14 percent of their white counterparts do. Since the end of the draft the proportion of high school graduates among blacks entering the Army has consistently exceeded that among whites, although the gap narrowed in the 1980s with the overall improvement in recruiting. In 1985, 95.4 percent of black men joining the Army had high school diplomas, in comparison with 87.6 percent of whites. Indeed, the Army's enlisted ranks are the only significant social arena in which black educational levels (though not test scores) surpass those of whites. A longtime employee of the U.S. Army in Europe—a German—told me during the late 1970s, “In the volunteer Army you are recruiting the best of the blacks and the worst of the whites.” At the time, his observation was basically correct. Since then, as the Army's enlistment package has gradually become more generous, better-qualified whites have been lured to the recruiter and the proportion of blacks in the enlisted ranks has dropped by a few percentage points. Still, the overall picture since the end of the draft is one of growing black participation in the volunteer Army. And it continues to be true that the black recruits are among “the best of the blacks.”

Young men and women can join the Army for enlistments of two, three, or four years. All soldiers undergo an eight-week basic course, essentially infantry training. Basic training represents a leveling process. At no other time in a soldier's Army career will racial differences be so utterly inconsequential. After basic training the recruit is sent to advanced training, where he is assigned a military occupational specialty (MOS). Most advanced training courses take six to twelve weeks, though training for some technical specialties may require as long as a year. Upon completion of advanced training the enlisted man is sent to a permanent duty station, where, in most cases, he can expect to complete his initial enlistment.

Blacks and whites diverge during selection for advanced training, because black soldiers tend to score lower than whites on aptitude tests. About two thirds of white recruits, and about one third of blacks, fall in the top half of

the test distribution. Black and white test scores are much closer among soldiers than among civilians, but the gap in the Army is substantial nonetheless. Because scores on aptitude tests help determine a soldier's MOS, there is a racial differential in many military jobs. Thus blacks are more likely than whites to be assigned to "support" branches of the service. They make up 50 percent of those in supply, 46 percent of those in food service, and 44 percent of those in general clerical work. Blacks are less likely than whites to be found in highly technical fields, such as signal intelligence, cryptography, and electronic warfare. And in combat specialties—the guts of the Army—black participation has been declining. From 1980 to 1985 the percentage of blacks in the infantry dropped from 32 to 22 percent. Declines were also registered in the armored and artillery specialties. Although blacks are overrepresented in combat specialties relative to their numbers in American society, they are considerably underrepresented relative to their numbers in the U.S. Army. Despite popular perceptions, black males are not being tracked into combat units.

The disparities in job assignments stem ultimately from the fact that the Army's insulation from civilian life is not total. Whereas blacks in the military are more likely than whites to have high school diplomas, they are also more likely to have attended inferior public schools. The Army can often mitigate the effects of social and educational deprivation, but it cannot eliminate them.

IN ONE IMPORTANT RESPECT BLACK SOLDIERS DO SIGNIFICANTLY better than white soldiers: making it through the initial enlistment. Since 1978 about one white male soldier in three has been prematurely discharged for reasons of undisciplined behavior, lack of aptitude, psychological problems, or the like. The figure for black male soldiers is one in four. Even among soldiers of similar educational background, blacks are more likely than whites to complete their enlistments.

For women soldiers, the racial contrast in attrition rates is even more striking. Blacks now make up 42 percent of enlisted women (who account for 10 percent of the enlisted ranks overall). Black females have been far more likely to complete their enlistments than white females. The low attrition rates for black women in the Army are not easily explained. Many black women claim that they have more street savvy than their white sisters, that they are simply better able to take the physical demands of Army life, or that they have a better sense of knowing when to "get over" (as goldbricking is now called) and when not to. Perhaps the main reason why blacks, male or female, are more likely to make a go of it in the Army is that they know that for them the grass is not necessarily greener in civilian life.

But blacks who return to civilian life after being honorably discharged earn significantly more than blacks who have not served in the military. The most carefully crafted

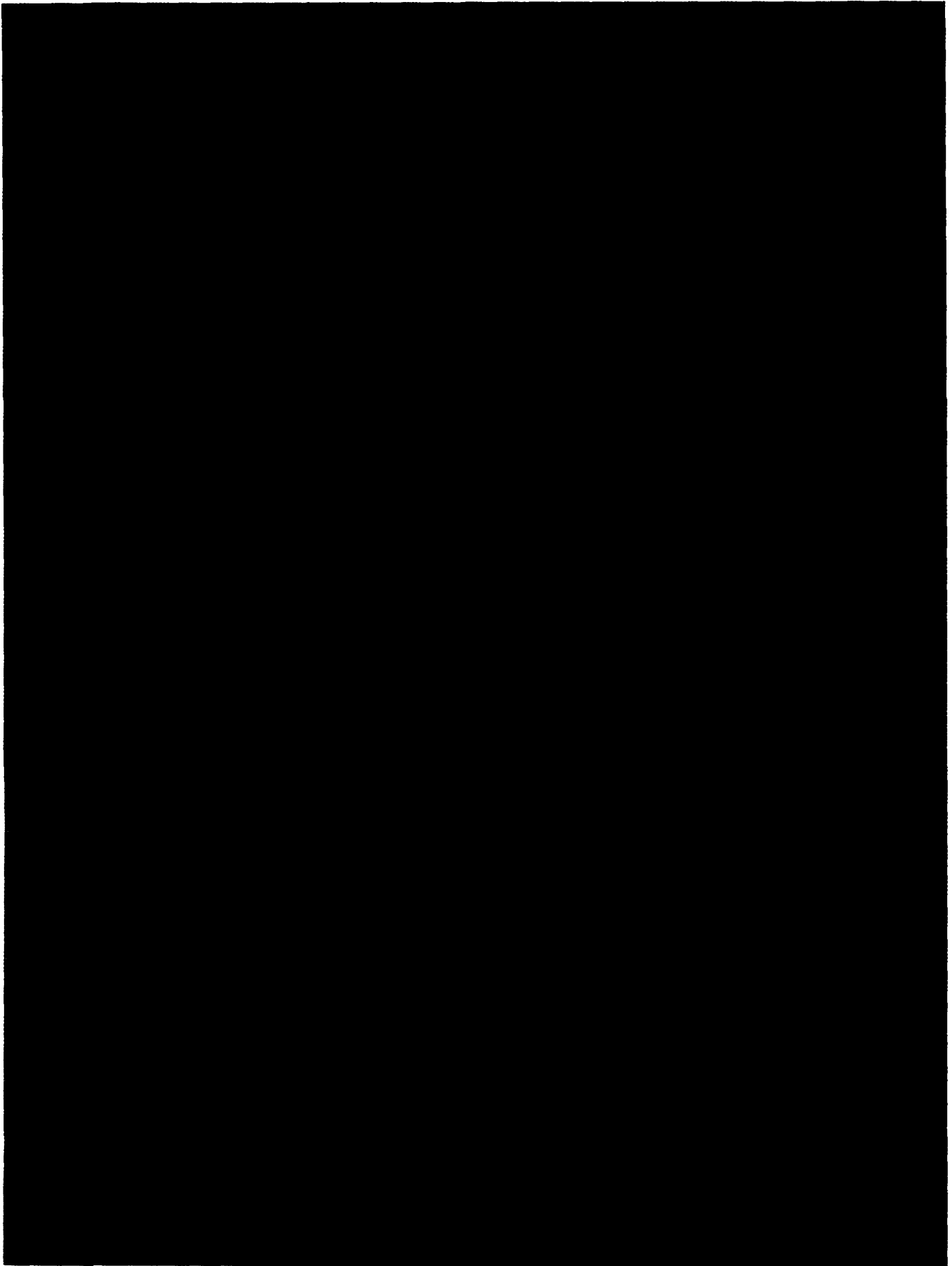
research on the matter has been conducted by Harley L. Browning, Sally C. Loproato, and Dudley L. Poston, Jr., a team of sociologists at the University of Texas at Austin. They have found that white veterans with a high school education fare the same in civilian life as their nonveteran counterparts, but that military service has a substantial positive impact on men who have not finished high school or who are black (or Hispanic). This finding is noteworthy, because soldiers in general and black soldiers in particular do not leave the military with skills readily transferable to the civilian marketplace. The explanation seems to be that the military teaches deprived youths how to cooperate and how to cope with the bureaucratic complexity of large-scale organizations. The military, in the words of the Texas study's authors, functions as a "bridging environment."

But I think there is more to it than that. The interracial leveling of military service gives black soldiers a perspective on society less easily acquired by black nonveterans. Just to have completed a tour of duty means that a black soldier has competed, and competed successfully, with whites. The Army experience emphasizes the correlation between reward and effort (as opposed to reward and race). A black sergeant put it this way: "The Army showed me that life can be hard no matter what your color. No race has it easy." That realization surely accounts for some of the intangible advantage black veterans take away from military service.

If the Army is a bridging environment, it is also one in which relations between the races, particularly among enlisted men, remain complex. Racial harmony does not always prevail. Some whites see blacks as arrogant if not threatening, and as the beneficiaries of a double standard. Some blacks see whites as deceptive and sometimes racist, and as the beneficiaries of a double standard. When a post is large enough to have more than one enlisted men's club, the clubs tend to become monopolized by one race or the other. As elsewhere in society, the closest friendships normally develop between people of similar educational or social backgrounds.

Still, give or take a surly remark here, a bruised sensibility there, the races do get on. The most common topics of concern and conversation, among and between the races, have nothing to do with race but deal with the work of the Army and with the good and the bad of military life. The locus of friction in the Army lies not so much between whites and blacks as between soldiers and sergeants, enlisted men and officers, line units and staff units, and so forth.

The influx of blacks in the Army has changed the culture of the barracks. A partial Afro-Americanization of enlisted life has occurred. Black Pentecostal congregations have been established on many bases; their services not only have attracted some whites but also have begun to influence the style of worship in more-conventional on-post services. White soldiers are moving away from a long-standing preference for country-and-western music. Rock-and-roll is now the music of choice, but disco, soul, and es-



pecially rap music have strong followings. If there is a favorite comedian among enlisted men today, it is undoubtedly Eddie Murphy.

How do whites and blacks perceive the racial climate in the military? Opinion surveys commissioned by the Army—there have been at least a dozen since the end of the draft—repeatedly reveal that whereas black soldiers are more likely than white soldiers to discern the persistence of racial discrimination in the military, they are also more likely to express satisfaction with their Army careers. The views of Specialist William Jones, a tank mechanic in West Germany, are fairly typical of what one hears from junior black enlisted men. Jones, who comes from the Cabrini-Green housing project in Chicago, credits the Army with “having pulled me up, and saving me from the streets.” He does not mind fixing tanks but knows that his Army training will not have a direct civilian payoff. Jones sends money home to his mother on a regular basis, and he also puts fifty dollars a month into an educational fund (the Army matches it twofold). Jones likes the Army but knows it is not perfect.

“You can still bump into an invisible shield of racism, but you have to ignore it,” Jones says. “I was at the EM [enlisted men’s] club and heard a white call someone a nigger the other night. I was shocked to hear it. I know whites are still top dog. But I know that we’ve got to get along together in peacetime if we’re going to fight together in wartime.” Jones says that when he goes back home now he has little in common with his friends who stayed behind. “They’re still hanging around waiting for something to happen. They’ll never grow up. They’ll always be losers. We don’t have much to talk about anymore.”

RELATIVE RATES OF PROMOTION HAVE SOMETHING to tell us about the status of blacks in the Army. During his first enlistment a soldier can expect to achieve the rank of specialist or corporal (E-4) or in some cases sergeant (E-5). Advancement to senior NCO grades—staff sergeant (E-6) and upward—takes much longer. A complex formula that weighs test scores, evaluations by superiors, service record, and interviews with a promotion board determines who will fill the openings that occur. Within twenty years of service a soldier will almost surely attain the rank of staff sergeant, and most likely will make sergeant first class (E-7) and get a shot at master sergeant (E-8). Sergeant major (E-9), the Army’s most senior enlisted rank, is attained only by exceptional men and women, almost all of whom are making the Army a thirty-year career.

If there is a black center to the Army, it is among the 94,000 black noncommissioned officers. Because blacks are about one and a half times more likely than whites to re-enlist after their first hitch, the black presence in the Army is notably high in the NCO corps. About a third of all buck sergeants and staff sergeants and about a quarter of all first sergeants, master sergeants, and sergeants major

are black. The rates of black promotion to the top three enlisted ranks are slightly lower than average. Primarily this reflects the relative underrepresentation of blacks in combat specialties, where promotion is easiest to achieve.

Sergeant Major Harold Smith joined the Army in 1956, the same year I was drafted. He has seen from the inside all the changes that I have seen as a frequent visitor. “The longer you stay in,” he told me not long ago, “the more you can see that racism knows how to hide itself. But it’s there. Still, I owe the Army a lot. When I came in, it was my last option. I wasn’t middle-class and I sure wasn’t upper-class. I wasn’t even working-class. So you know what that leaves.”

“The Army was my only chance to turn myself around, and I took it,” Major Smith said. “I went to Vietnam three times. Along the way I picked up a bachelor’s degree, and I’m halfway through my master’s. But the thing I’ll never forget is those days of race troubles. I used to think those race-relations and black-history courses were all to the good. Now I think we were tricked. The black soldier needs courses on how to use the system, not on telling whites our secrets.”

“There are more-subtle forms of racism today than there used to be,” Smith continued. “Some of the white boys have posters saying THE SOUTH WILL RISE AGAIN. I tell them to take them down, because it bothers the blacks. Some of the white sergeants say I’m too touchy. I’ll say this, though. I know some of those white sergeants are racists, but they never once let anything slip. That’s progress of a sort.

“Why did I stay in so long? I wanted to teach young black soldiers how to make it in a white man’s world. If you expect to give orders, you have to learn to take orders. You have to adapt to the Army; it’s not going to change for you. It’s as simple as that.”

Many black NCOs profess a kind of bootstrap conservatism. They can easily recognize a part of themselves in the character of Master Sergeant Vernon Waters, in the movie *A Soldier’s Story*, set in the days of the segregated Army. Sergeant Waters is obsessively concerned that blacks not play the fool in front of whites. Waters can be seen as a martinet or as someone who challenges black soldiers to do their best. What is different today, of course, is that black NCOs lead soldiers of all races. Black sergeants take umbrage at any hint that they are partial to blacks. Indeed, an analysis of efficiency reports by Charles Hines, a black brigadier general who holds a Ph.D. in sociology, suggests that black sergeants grade “average” black soldiers more severely than white sergeants do. If there is any racial favoritism in superior-subordinate relations, it is certainly not black favoring black.

Because of their unwillingness to show favoritism, a number of senior black noncommissioned officers say that they feel helpless to alter a trend that has disturbing implications for junior black NCOs. During the late 1970s, when recruitment and retention rates were relatively low, the Army accepted many people into its ranks—including many blacks—who were of less than superior caliber.

Army Secretary Alexander dismissed as racist any criticism of the quality of the new recruits. Now, at a time of high recruitment and retention rates, those enlistees are coming up for re-enlistment and promotion. Thanks both to the lingering effects of the recession of 1981–1983 and to new enlistment incentives being offered, the Army has been enjoying something of a buyer's market. Standards for re-enlistment and promotion have been raised. Some black soldiers who have performed well in subordinate roles and who would easily have won promotion several years ago cannot meet the new standards. The senior black NCOs I've talked to are of two minds about the situation. On the one hand, they know that many of the most vulnerable black candidates for promotion were coaxed to join by an Army desperate for recruits, and encouraged to think of military service as a career. On the other hand, they believe that the highest possible standards must be maintained, both for the Army's sake and so that there will be no question that blacks have met those standards.

What the near future holds is already clear. Blacks in the Army, hampered by low test scores, will be promoted into the ranks of the NCO corps at a rate somewhat lower than that for whites. But because disproportionately high numbers of blacks will be candidates for promotion, blacks will continue to account for more than their share of the Army's NCOs. The social importance of these twenty- and thirty-year soldiers transcends their function in the military. Every year for decades to come some 2,500 black NCOs in the Army (5,000 in the military as a whole) are expected to retire from service. Most of them will be relatively young and looking forward to second careers. The impact of this group of men and women on the civilian black community is impossible to predict, but it is likely to be tangible and positive.

ABOVE THE RANKS OF NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS in the Army is the officer corps, where one person in ten today is black (the figure was one in twenty-five as recently as 1972). If officers are the executives of the armed forces, then the armed forces boast more black executives than any other institution in the country. The Army's 10,000 black officers come from several places. The most prestigious source of a commission is still the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and about seven percent of its graduating class in recent years has been black. However, most officers, white or black, come not from West Point but from campus-based detachments of the Reserve Officer Training Corps. ROTC produces six times as many officers as the Military Academy does, and one ROTC graduate out of five is black. The expansion of the black officer corps is due in part to the expansion of ROTC since 1969 at historically black colleges—the Pentagon's response to the abolition of ROTC at many predominantly white institutions. Almost half of all Army ROTC commissions received by blacks are awarded by twenty-one black schools.

Whether or not race enters into the officer-promotion process remains a bone of contention in the military. An equal-opportunity assessment conducted in 1984 shows that black and white officers are selected at about the same rates for the advanced service schools, war colleges, and command assignments that are so important for career advancement. Still, white officers believe that blacks are unfairly favored in promotion decisions; black officers contend that they have to be better qualified than whites in order to advance. The truth seems to me to lie with the black viewpoint.

A very senior black officer gave me this succinct appraisal, one that is seconded by most older black officers: "You don't have to be a supernigger anymore, but you still have to be better than the rest to make it." Another senior black officer said, "We can run the race with handicaps, but don't expect blacks to perform miracles. The Army, to its credit, doesn't make us perform miracles." He continued, "I'm worried about some of the younger guys. They don't understand that a black still has to do more than a white to get promoted—maybe not as much as before, but still more. If they think equal effort will get equal reward, they've got a big surprise coming."

At the pinnacle of the military hierarchy are, of course, the generals. As of early this year there were thirty-one black Army generals on active duty, about seven percent of the total. Another six black generals were in the Army Reserves or the National Guard. About fifty were retired. Some one hundred blacks have achieved flag rank in the U.S. military, all but four of whom are alive today. Two have been four-star generals—the Army's Roscoe Robinson, Jr., and the late Daniel ("Chappie") James, of the Air Force. Eight blacks have attained the three-star rank. Two black women, Hazel W. Johnson-Brown and Sherian G. Cadoria, have become brigadier generals in the Army. The promotion of a black to flag rank is no longer a rarity in the American military. It occasions little comment.

To a person, black generals look back upon extremely satisfying careers. They are rarely shy about their accomplishments or abashed about their patriotism. If there is a sense of disappointment among them, it is not with the military but with what happens after they leave the military. Black generals feel that few of their kind attain post-retirement positions commensurate with their abilities. One retiree put it simply: "I will state categorically that no black general ever got a decent job in the private sector in Washington, D.C." Another said, "Look—the offers come rolling in for white generals even before they're out of uniform."

What is particularly puzzling is that most of these retired black generals once had responsibility for thousands of soldiers and oversaw logistics systems of enormous cost and complexity. Many are familiar with the contracting and procurement procedures of the defense industry. Yet consultancies and seats in the boardrooms of the military-industrial complex continue to elude even the most highly qualified black generals. Why is this the case? It is hard not

to conclude that the discrimination these men have overcome in the military overtakes them again in civilian life.

For the time being, the state of the black officer corps appears healthy. If there is concern among black officers, it has to do with the quality of newly minted black second lieutenants, fresh out of ROTC. A relatively small percentage of blacks at predominantly white schools participate in ROTC. And though ROTC enjoys more general support at historically black schools, this support is not as strong as it once was. These schools, moreover, no longer attract the cream of black high school graduates. Observers agree that the levels of writing and analytic skills among recent ROTC graduates from the black colleges are lower than those of their predecessors—a development that could eventually affect promotion rates. Black leaders in the Army worry that the pool of highly qualified black officer-candidates could dry up. One senior black officer told me that unless the black middle class somehow gets behind ROTC, the patterns of the old segregated Army might recur—with blacks aplenty in the enlisted ranks and a senior officer corps consisting almost solely of whites.

WHEREAS THE BLACK COMMUNITY IS ALERT TO THE opportunities that the military offers its young people, it has difficulty focusing on the black career officer. Certainly, black officers are seen as individual success stories by their families, friends, and neighbors. But the leaders of black organizations seem reluctant to recognize the achievements of blacks in the military. I have asked many senior black officers why this should be the case, and the following reply is typical of what they had to say: "To pat us on the back would be to pat the military on the back. This they can't afford to do. It galls them that of all institutions, it is the Army that is really making a go of integration."

It galls them, I was told, for several reasons. One is that blacks in the military have chosen to pay their dues in the white system, not the black one; as a result, career blacks in the Army have less of an affinity with established black organizations than many other blacks have. More important, though, is the ideological orientation of civilian black leaders. Most of them are uninterested in, even alienated from, the long-term goals of American foreign policy, among which resistance to Soviet expansion is central. When foreign-policy issues are raised by black leaders, the discussion generally involves racist features of U.S. behavior overseas, especially in Africa and the Caribbean. I do not know of a single elected black official or prominent spokesman who supports increased defense spending. Among traditional black leaders there does not seem to be much conviction that blacks have a stake in broad defense issues. Black leaders often find it hard to reconcile themselves to the fact that black officers are the military executors of policies that they deem irrelevant at best. When the Congressional Black Caucus issued a formal condemnation of the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the reaction of one

black general was, "Why can't they support us just this once?" Another general explained, "I just tune out the so-called black leadership when it comes to anything military."

As such comments suggest, the estrangement is mutual. Black officers tend to be unimpressed with the black civilian establishment. Senior black officers emphasize that as military managers they have acquired a special set of skills. They command thousands of men, and they give orders to whites as well as blacks. They have learned from the inside how a mainstream organization functions. Inevitably, their circumstances affect their perceptions. Among black civilians a large majority sees in Jesse Jackson a stirring leader who was shortchanged by the Democratic Party establishment. Many black military officers, in contrast, see Jackson as a man who does not understand the white world and who is therefore destined to be largely ineffective on a national stage. Black officers view some aspects of the civilian black leadership's agenda as highly dubious; those who argue that affirmative action is necessary nevertheless believe that preferential treatment is inappropriate in the military. They draw manifest self-esteem from the fact that they themselves have not been beneficiaries of such treatment—rather, the reverse. Black officers distrust black leaders in civilian life who would seek advancement through racial politics or as supplicants of benevolent whites. As a group they are unquestionably less liberal than blacks outside the military. While no precise data exist on the subject, career blacks in the Army were probably much more likely than civilian blacks to vote for Ronald Reagan in 1984.

Even so, however, my own informal poll indicates that by far the majority of black officers and NCOs voted Democratic. For the fact is that blacks in the military, unlike whites, cannot forget their color. One career soldier told me, "My wife said I should vote Reagan because the man gave me a raise. But my father made me promise I would never vote for anyone who kept the black man down. I kept my promise to my father."

I HAVE ASKED MANY ARMY BLACKS WHAT IT WAS THAT made a military career attractive as an avenue of mobility. For one thing, many of them have said, there were enough blacks in the Army to promise a certain degree of social comfort and professional support. For another, there were enough non-black and non-poor people to prevent the Army from being thought of as a "black" institution or a haven for society's underclass. The Army, in short, delivered the uplift but not the stigma of a government social program. If the Army has succeeded as a remedial organization for many youths with otherwise dead-end prospects, it may be precisely because the Army does not admit to being a remedial organization at all. In the coming debate on whether the nation should institute some sort of system of national service for the young, this point might profitably be borne in mind. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

CHARLES STEWART ROLLS AND HENRY ROYCE

IN 1899 THE HONOURABLE Charles Stewart Rolls, age twenty-two, was apprehended by the London police for "driving furiously" and failing to employ a man with a red flag to walk in front of his autocar to warn pedestrians, as required by law. The year 1900, however, heralded a new age. The speed limit was raised from 4 to 12 mph, and the flag-bearer was erased from the statutes. When the Duke and Duchess of York (later George V and Queen Mary) dropped in on Lord Llangattock at his Sussex estate, it was the peer's son, young Rolls, who drove them around in his shiny new Panhard.

Unmentioned in accounts of the day is how the royal passengers were joggled by engine vibration and deafened by noisy exhaust. The Panhard's inadequacies were a constant source of anguish to Rolls, and when soon afterward he set up a kind of aristocratic auto dealership in London's West End, he lamented that the cars he sold were, although the best available, not comfortable, reliable, or English. English cars were an abomination.

Except perhaps for one currently being assembled in the North. There a certain Henry Royce had designed his way from abject poverty to the successful manufacture of dynamos and electric cranes. He was also the owner of a malfunctioning Decauville, and had vowed to build a car that worked. He had in mind a ten-horsepower, two-cylinder model, for which he designed countless improvements. Rolls heard of it through the grapevine; could Royce come to London to consult? No, Royce was busy. Perhaps Rolls would come to Manchester?

The natural aristocracy of genius won out: Rolls took the train north. They met in the Palm Court of the Midland Hotel early in May, 1904. Working-class diction confronted Cambridge enunciation, but they spoke the same language; more to the point, they liked each other. After lunch they took a little spin. The car purred along smoothly, quietly; nothing rattled, nothing broke. It was the best car in the world. Before long the world would know it.

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel

A Short Story



RUNNING OUT

BY BETH LORDAN

THESE DAYS MIKE ACCEPTED THE SMALL PLEASURES that came to him. He was pleased when the last bag of rubbish from inside exactly filled the outside garbage can on the morning the garbage guy came by. The pleasure didn't last, of course. Even a man in Mike's circumstances, unemployed and unexpectedly without his wife, couldn't find deep pleasure in such accidental perfections. A deep pleasure would be, maybe, coming home tonight from somewhere and smelling spaghetti sauce as he got to the front door, hoping, and then scorning himself for hoping, and then hoping again, and getting inside to find Vicky truly home. The moment when she turned around in the kitchen and spoke to him, as if she'd never been gone—he tried sometimes to figure out what she should say to make it perfect, but he hadn't hit it yet—that, *that* would be a deep pleasure. In the meantime, he took what he could: filling one garbage can level in exactly seven days, going down to the cellar with the right number of hangers just as the dryer stopped, folding a slice of Swiss cheese to match the size of a slice of bread. If he'd been counting, he could have added up a good number of these small things by the time he put that trash at the curb. But he wasn't a counter, even if he sensed the weight of sunshine floating in as he woke, a perfect shave, and his shirt tucking in right the first time.

. . .

He walked into the diner at exactly ten o'clock and called out, "Hey, Nancy! Where's my coffee?" He liked calling out, as he used to like calling Vicky "woman" in their kitchen.

Maybe eight people were in the diner, two couples in booths, a few people at the counter. Mike knew all but one couple by face or name. The number was just right: any fewer and Nancy and Mary would talk to him about not having a job, or about Vicky leaving him. That was such a beating, either way, that on days when nobody was there but Jim Parsons at one end of the counter, with his little tin teapot, and some traveling family at a booth, Mike would order his coffee to go, and look through jukebox titles while he waited. Mary seemed to think she was an employment agency, and she'd offer to

mention his name to bosses who came in for coffee. Terrific.

Mike's life was built of certain simple facts that Mary, balloon boobs and brain to match, couldn't seem to get a firm hold on. Mike knew how to do what he did: finish carpentry. And he didn't do anything else; he did woodwork, trim, especially restoration, any kind of finish work. And that's all. He *could* take a job washing dishes, or delivering dry cleaning for Mr. Greene. He could do some kind of dull work for eight hours a day, and not make any more than he got on unemployment. But one of these days, probably before his unemployment ran out, somebody around Clayborne or up in Livingston or someplace was going to need a finish man, and he'd be all set. In the meantime—thank you, Mary.

Nancy was smarter by twenty miles than Mary, but she had this thing about him and Vicky that wouldn't quit. The first couple of times she had started in on it he'd tried to change the subject, but then he'd gotten teed off. "What are you, writin' a book?" he had snarled, so mad he'd left without paying for the coffee. He hadn't gotten a chance to drink it, why the hell should he pay for it? Let her drink the goddamn coffee. The next morning the diner was busy. He didn't have a thing to say to her anyway. But by the next day he had let it go, and everything was fine for about a week, until she had time to come and lean her hip against the counter in front of him. Two sentences, and

she was at it again, like it was a project.

"Look, Nancy," he'd said, "just forget it. It's no big deal, happens all the time. I'm fine, she's fine. No big deal."

"Okay, sure, but sometimes talking about it helps, you know?"

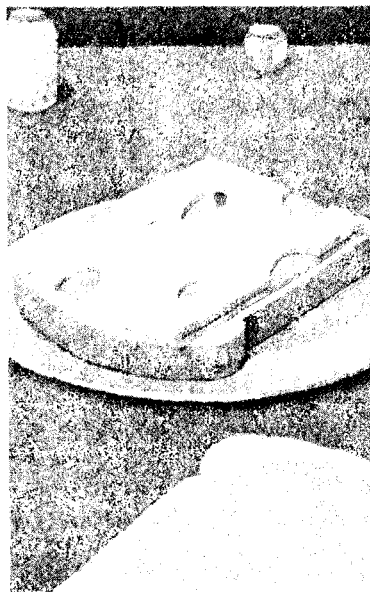
"Helps what, for crying out loud?"

She had turned a little toward him, rolling that hip along the counter edge. "Come on! You don't just forget it, you know—it eats at you, and if you can get it out . . ."

"Nancy, there ain't no *it*! No eat, no it, no out, no nothing!"

"You're such a big strong man you don't even notice Vicky's not there in bed anymore?"

"What, you get a mail-order shrink diploma?"



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL VALOWITZ

"Doesn't take anything to see you're sore and lonely."

"Look, don't get confused—you think I come in here because I'm lonely? You really think if I was lonely I'd be spending time in *here*, talking to *you*?"

"Okay." She had taken her cigarettes out of her uniform pocket, from under the apron, and lit one, staring off down the empty counter. "Okay." She exhaled. "So. Think it'll stop raining?"

"Always does," he'd said. Caught between satisfaction and shame, he'd left her a dollar tip. After that, if she looked like she wanted to talk, he just ordered his coffee to go.

But today was perfect: just enough people, not too busy.

"Hey, Nancy! Where's my coffee?" He took his regular place, between the doughnuts and the eternal layer cake. She came out of the kitchen and stopped dead, like he was the last person she ever expected to see in the spot he had filled every morning for six weeks.

"Where's that other guy?" she said.

Mike looked over his shoulder. "What other guy?"

"The guy who was sitting there a minute ago."

"In *my* place?"

"Yeah, just a minute ago."

"Oh, him—that big guy?"

"Yeah, big guy sitting right there. Ordered coffee."

"Big guy, bald, leather jacket?"

Nancy nodded, holding back a grin.

"Big chain around his neck? Little monkey on the stool next to him, holding the chain?"

"Right, that's him! Where'd he go?"

Mike shrugged. "Dunno—he was gone when I got here."

Nancy laughed, congratulating him. "Guess you'll have to drink his coffee, then," she said.

And then she poured his coffee and brought it to him. It was fresh, it was hot and black, it smelled like Sunday morning from upstairs. She put the cup down in front of him, slid over a lidded pitcher of cream, and went off down the counter. Mike poured a thin stream of white from the metal pitcher, and it dove down through the coffee and curled back up. He stirred, and the coffee took the color of old oak woodwork, a color luminous and solemn. He sipped cautiously: it was coffee like no coffee had been, or could be again. He raised the cup a second time and smelled deeply before he drank. That coffee was flavor and comfort, pure warmth, pure pleasure, coffee blessed and bestowed upon him. Perfection in a thick white cup.

He drank it as slowly as he dared, wanting it to last forever, fearing it would begin to cool.

When it was gone, he held the cup for a moment in both hands. Nancy went by, writing on her pad as she walked.



Many days he just stayed in the diner until the lunch crowd started coming in, nursed two or three cups of coffee, talked about nothing with people he knew, joked around with Nancy, and bought the paper to read at home with his lunch. But today was too good for that. The sunshine coming down warm through a thin breeze on his way in was still out there; in here he felt like he'd had the best of it already. He put the heavy cup down on the counter and left two quarters beside it. Jim Parsons came in and said, "You leaving already, Mike? I must be running late."

"Either that or I'm ahead of myself," Mike said. They shook hands, and Mike went to pay Mary at the cash register. The out-of-town couple from the front

booth came right behind him, so Mary didn't even get to ask if he'd found anything yet, and Mike got the pleasure of making her blush by grabbing and kissing her hand when she held it out to take his dollar bill. They both laughed, and Mary said, "Why, *Mister Connor*!" But that blush was fine, right down her throat into the vee of her uniform. Mike pressed the dollar bill into her hand.

"You have a *good* day, sweetheart," he said, his voice deep with mock passion. He patted her shoulder and went out the door without waiting for his change.

AFTER BEING IN THE SUN, MIKE HAD TROUBLE SEEING inside the dim post office, but he could see through the little glass door of his box that at least the top envelope was a letter. He turned the brass knob through the combination, heard the miniature weights of the cylinder drop, and pulled out three envelopes.

Helen, behind the counter, didn't even look up from her ledger as he walked back over the dull old floorboards and out the door. Helen had a dense moustache. She was Vicky's aunt, and she hadn't spoken a civil word to him in four months, since the end of his last job. She did, however, usually speak. "Man of leisure," she'd say, or "Must be nice," or just "Some people," with disgust in her voice as dark and thick as the hair over her lip. Helen made getting the mail, Mike had said to Vicky, like going to a VD clinic. And she had laughed at him, back in the winter, laughed and said, "Oh, Mike, you know she does everybody that way—even me." He'd made Vicky go with him the next day, to see if she was right.

"Morning, Aunt Helen," Vicky had said. "Beautiful day out there!"

"For those who can be out there," Helen said back, and sniffed.

He'd felt Vicky barely keeping back her whoopy laughter; all the way home she'd held onto his arm, laughing. "Did you see how she wrinkles her nose when she sniffs?"

Makes you worry about that moustache, you know? One day it'll go right up!"

But things hadn't stayed that way. His being out of work hadn't changed the money that much, but something, some way of not having a job, he didn't seem to be able to figure out. He was home too much, or out too much, or something. One morning he got home with the mail and said to Vicky, "Your aunt was really sweet today—she took the time to inform me that I'm still around."

"So?" No smile.

"Nice of her to notice, don't you think?"

"Pretty hard not to, isn't it." Not a question. End of conversation. He'd left the mail on the table and gone back out.

So Helen's ignoring him today was one more pleasure. Not deep, but a pleasure.

He stood at the foot of the post office steps in the sun to look at his mail. One letter was from his mother, addressed, in defiance, to Mr. and Mrs.; another was from the electric and gas; the third was a letter with no return address—probably junk. He could go back to the diner to open them. He looked that way, already knowing the coffee'd be older by now and disappointing, and the lunch crowd would be coming in. Then he saw Vicky's oldest brother, Ben.

"Ben," Mike said.

Ben nodded, said "Mike," and put out his hand.

"Good to see you," Mike said, grateful for the simple warmth of the older man's dry hand.

"Been out of town," Ben said. "You working yet?"

"Nope, still waiting."

"Nice weather for it."

"Nice weather for working, too."

They both smiled. "I heard something about Tony Andrellos getting a crew together for some job—train depot or something," Ben said.

"Oh, yeah? Maybe I'll give him a call. Thanks."

"I don't know how solid it is. Just something I heard."

"Okay—I'll give him a call."

"Well," Ben said.

"Yup," Mike said. "I better get along. Good to see you, Ben."

"You too."

Mike turned and headed home. He hated to go in out of this sunshine, so he sat on his front steps to open his mail. New York State Electric and Gas. A check. Seventy-five dollars, payable to Michael R. Connor, refund of deposit. He grinned. Free money, no doubt about it. Made him feel so good, along with seeing Ben that way and the sunshine and all, he almost didn't want to open his mother's letter. But he did open it, after folding the stiff check to fit into his shirt pocket.

From his mother came a note folded around a newspaper clipping. "Dear Mike and Vicky, Just thought you



might get a kick out of this. Love, Mom." The clipping was from the *Livingston Weekly* and included two pictures of the Livingston Hotel, before and after restoration. The headline read, "LOCAL LANDMARK REDEDICATED," and the article reported that Mike Connor, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Connor, of Boyd Street, Livingston, and graduate of Livingston High, married to the former Victoria Spencer, daughter of Mrs. Wanda Spencer and the late Randall Spencer, of Clayborn, had worked on the restoration. Mike chuckled, knowing this was the kick his mother meant—the *Weekly* and its way of working as many local families as possible into every story—and he winced just the least bit, wondering if whoever wrote the article knew about

Vicky. But even with all that, he was glad to have the pictures.

The old hotel had been his last job, good work, good crew, good money. He'd spent three weeks just on the banister of the stairway, and nobody had tried to make him hurry or fake it or anything. Somebody had tried to gild the mahogany rail somewhere along the line. He'd done the stripping and the refinishing and the replacements for the spindles; even he would have trouble now saying which of the spindles were original and which were his. He slipped the clipping and note back into the envelope. He took the third envelope, unopened, in with the other two, and put them all on the table while he made his lunch.

After he'd made his sandwich, folding the cheese and meat to fit the bread, and poured himself a glass of milk, the phone rang.

"What the hell you doin' in the house on a day like this?" It was Jerry.

"What the hell you doin' talkin' obscenities over the phone lines?"

"Just tryin' to save my buddy from gettin' rickets from lack of sunshine."

Mike laughed because he knew what was coming, and Jerry came through, tidy as can be: "Now, we all know that for rickets you got to have two things: exercise and yeast. And over at the Inn they got some nice cold yeast and a nice green exercise machine. How about it, Mikey? Shoot some eight ball?"

"You know me, Jerry—anything for my health. Meet you there in half an hour, okay?"

"You got any bread?"

"How much you need?"

"Oh, five bucks, somethin' like that."

"Man, I'm wealthy today—got this refund from NYSEG. No problem."

"Well, then, we got us a game!"

Mike hung up and went back to the table, where that last envelope was sticking out from under the other two.

Why not, he thought, and opened it. Though his address had been typed, the letter inside was handwritten and short.

Mike,

My bus gets in to Slaters Falls at 7:30
Wednesday night. Can you meet me?

Vicky

He read it twice, to be sure, but there it was, better than he could have imagined or planned. She was coming, whether or not, and asking only if he'd be there, but asking it, and with just enough time between his knowing and his getting there tomorrow night. When she got off the bus, she'd have to be glad to see him, just because he had come as she asked. And they couldn't even start trying to explain or settle anything there in public, so the first few minutes, at least, would be friendly and easy. And then the twenty-minute ride home alone in the simplicity of the car. Or more than twenty minutes, if they wanted to take it, if they were talking and they needed to go on longer; they could keep riding around like they used to when they never seemed to have enough time alone together. He smoothed the letter out on the table.

THE DOOR OF THE INN WAS PROPPED OPEN WITH A broken barstool, and Jerry was alone at the bar sipping a draught when Mike got there. He heard the delicate rattle of balls from the back room.

"Competition?" he asked, tipping his head toward the pool room.

"Kids," Jerry said. "Broke kids. They'll be done in about"—he raised his half-empty glass like a gauge—"twelve ounces."

"Sounds good. Hey, Charlie!"

Fat Charlie looked up from his paper behind the bar.

"You called?"

"Eight ball in the side pocket. Cash a check?"

"How big?"

"Seventy-five."

Charlie swiveled on his stool and rang the register open, ruffled through the bills inside. "No problem. Personal?"

Mike signed the check and slid it across the bar. "No problem, Charlie, like you said. This one's backed by God Almighty. And gimme a Pabst out of that and two bucks in quarters, and a drink for my buddy here."

Charlie set the beer on the bar and the pile of bills next to it, with the quarters on top in two equal stacks. Mike felt under the end of the one for the end of a ten, took it between his thumb and forefinger, and pulled it sharply. It came out the way a magician's tablecloth comes from under the china. Jerry whistled ad-

miringly, and Mike presented him with the ten, a dry flourish in the air.

"I don't know, buddy—looks like you're hot today. Maybe I better stay off that table."

"Have no fear, have no fear. Flip for the break?"

"I call."

Mike tossed a quarter in the air.

"Heads," Jerry said. He caught the quarter and slapped it onto the bar. "Tails it is. The man's on a roll."

"Then let's get in there before you put so much mouth on it it's gone."

Jerry grinned at Charlie. "Sore winner," he said, and followed Mike into the back room, where the two kids were just leaving.

Mike made the six on the break, a good scattered break that left him three pretty good shots. He made them all. Then he made the seven ball, not so easy, but clean. Jerry, leaning against the wall, started chalking his cue. The cue ball was right against the rail; Mike's only shot was a probable scratch on the five. He stepped back from the table, looking for an angle, and then stepped up and shot. The five dropped, and the cue bounced softly off the pocket corner, a fraction this side of a scratch.

"Nice shot."

The three ball looked impossible, so Mike chalked quickly and tried a three-rail shot, in total confidence that he'd miss but leave Jerry a tough start. The cue ball caromed crazily, nicked the three, and sent it, slow as oil on a puddle, into the pocket. Mike stared. Jerry hooted and came over to the table to slap him on the back.

"What the hell kind of shot was that?"

Mike shook his head, grinning.

"Hooh! I'd have bet you your whole ten bucks you wouldn't make that shot in a million years!" Jerry was tickled. He was at the table now, he and Mike competing together against the table. They both looked at the eight ball, hugging the rail near a corner but apparently closed in on two sides by all the stripes.

"It's not makable," Mike said.

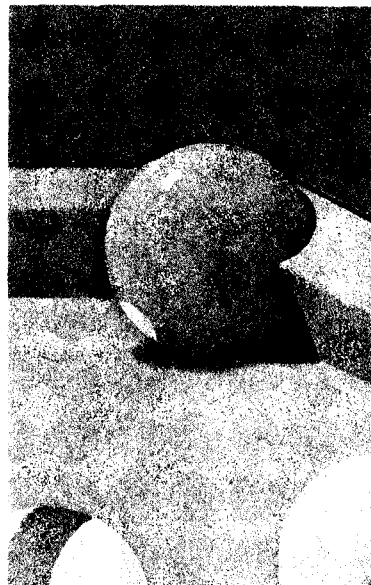
"Neither was that last one, buddy," Jerry said. He walked around to the end of the table and squatted to get his eye at ball level. "Come here, Mike—here, look at this. If you just stroke it in like that, just impulse it through right there—"

"No way, man."

"What do you mean, no way? Get over here and look at it." Mike went over. Jerry squinted at the shot. "You just want to *push* the cue ball through, see?"

"Jerry, that ball's not going through there unless I shrink it, and I didn't bring my magic shrinking powder."

Jerry aimed his squint up at Mike. "You don't want to try for the run, or what? Hunker down here and *look*, big shot."



Mike hunkered down and looked, and he saw it: just barely, from there, Jerry might be right. The shot was, in theory, barely makable. "Okay," he said, and stood, and Jerry moved out of the way, and Mike shot.

"Oh, too *hard*, man!" Jerry groaned, as the cue hit the ball. But he was wrong. The white ball stalled when it hit the eight, and the eight, as if it had an acre of clear green felt to play on, rolled clean out of the forest of stripes and, calmly, plunked into the corner pocket.

"I don't believe it!" Jerry yelled. "Holy shit, Mike—I mean you are *hot* today! I thought you blew it, I really thought you blew it, and there it goes—damn!"

Mike was still looking at the table, trying to see how it had happened. He knew he'd hit the cue ball too hard, at least for the shot he'd been trying to make. Jerry shook his shoulder, slapped his back.

"Hey, Fats! Come on, come on, my turn. You rack 'em up, and Jerry gets a shot."

Mike laughed. He hadn't run the table in years, not since high school, when he used to go to the old Livingston Hotel every day after school and shoot.

Jerry got his shot. On the break he got the eleven, and then missed sinking the twelve by a hair. Mike looked the table over carefully, planned out the next two shots, while Jerry ragged him. "What's hot gets cold, man, and what's cold warms up, don't forget. You can't last forever, just remember that, buddy."

Mike grinned at him and pointed with his stick. "One ball, corner pocket," he said. And ran the table again. Charlie came back to watch it, and he and Jerry said less and less, just a low whistle now and then after a pretty shot. This time the eight was easy, but they all watched it in silence anyway, and stared at the pocket as the ball rattled into the rack below.

Jerry racked for Mike's break. The two and the ten dropped, and Mike looked at the table for a long time before deciding. "Three in the side," he said.

And ran the table again, easing the eight in more gently, more hopefully, than he had ever done anything in his life.

"Phenomenal, man," Jerry said. He'd stood his cue against the wall three shots ago, and didn't move now from where he leaned beside it. "Phenomenal. We should take you on tour."

"I don't know if I ever saw that before," Charlie said, as quiet as Jerry. "Three runs in a row like that."

Mike laid his stick across the table. "What the hell time is it anyway?"

"Four-thirty."

"Time for a beer," Mike said.

"You don't want to start fuzzing up when you're shooting like that," Jerry said.

"I'm done shooting. Now I'm drinking."

"Done?"

Mike laughed. "Yeah—had my exercise, now I want my yeast."

They went out to the bar, and Jerry slapped Mike's shoulder again. "Well, I called it, boy—you are hot."

"I was hot, Jer, and now I'm thirsty."

"Thirsty? You had a beer, not three hours ago—what's this thirsty?"

"Yeah, I had it, but I didn't get to drink it. You're one lazy pool player, man."

"You hear that, Charlie? Here I am, keeping up this billiard hall so the great man can perform, and he calls me names."

The beer Charlie set in front of Mike, and refused to take money for, was so cold it frosted the glass to the top. Mike raised his glass to Jerry, a salute of gratitude, and Jerry raised his in return. Then Mike drank, and the beer, gold and cold, was as fine as the morning's thin breeze had been.

AT SIX O'CLOCK MIKE UNLOCKED HIS KITCHEN DOOR and let himself in. Vicky's letter lay in the center of the table; it had folded itself partway back up. He went to the refrigerator, pulled out the package of sliced ham, and ate the two pieces that were left. He looked in the refrigerator again. He was nearly out of a lot of things—milk, butter, one egg left. Maybe he should go over to the store and stock up before Vicky got back.

But not tonight. Tonight was the end of the perfect day, no time for grocery shopping. He went to the door of the living room, still thinking about that last eight ball, how generously it had moved for him. And now the light came slanting into the living room, and, as Mike watched, the rectangle of sun on the floor stretched an inch, two inches, and for a sudden moment it matched exactly the size and shape of the living-room carpet. Some slight cloud must have moved out of the way just then, for the light pulsed stronger. Mike stood for a few seconds there, pleased at the exactness of it. Before the light could change again, begin to fade, he turned and went back through the kitchen and up the stairs.

He inspected the bathroom and the bedroom, thinking maybe he'd do some cleaning before getting Vicky tomorrow, but he couldn't see much to do. He'd had so little to do the past few weeks, he'd spent a lot of the time organizing and cleaning in the house, just to keep busy.

He went back down and out, heading to the diner for supper. This would be the last diner supper for a while, he reminded himself. Also the last afternoon playing pool, for a while. But right now, right now, halfway between his front steps and the front door of the diner, everything was exactly perfect. A breeze came up, the smell of daffodils from somewhere. And tomorrow Vicky would be home. For just a moment he was fully, deeply pleased. Happy.

He decided against the diner, in favor of walking. Just keep walking for a while, keep that feeling going until it ran out. If he could have found a way, an easy way, well this side of death, to keep everything just as it was forever, he'd have taken it. Any minute of today, he'd have taken it. Drink that one cup of coffee all damn day if he could. Couldn't. Vicky'd be home, tomorrow. □

HALLEY'S COMET

BY DIANE ACKERMAN

I

A nomad roaming
the starlit halls
of evening,

in a cold sweat
from some early tantrum
of light,

it bolts toward
the glow of a dashing
blue planet,

ancient, glacial,
always in a lather,

to blaze its loop
through the pastures
of the Sun.

A rumor at first
on a thousand
glass lips,

it passes
like winter
from land to land,

stretching a long arm
around the shivers
of the night,

waving its white
plume—
cascading lilies—

signing the blue
petition of each day
with its haste.

II

Dropped out of nothing,
it will return
to nothing,

but, in between,
toast the miracle waters
of Earth:

the long sermon
of her deserts,

the green wings
of her jungles,

the pink moths
of her cities

trembling
along the hilltops,

the thick fungus
of her buildings,

the worn brown corduroy
of her farms,

the walking symphonies
of dappled cells.

III

A waltzing iceberg
large as life,

it arrives with a shout
and will go
with a whisper,

vanish from the fragrant
isolation
of our skies,

tugged away
by a grip beyond plea,
beyond mourning,

as if it heard news
from a far country.
It will leave with its cold

gemlike pith,
a moment's gorgeous visitor,
fading.



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MUSIC

HOW GERSHWIN PLAYED IT

BY WILLIAM H. YOUNGREN

AN EXTRAORDINARY amount of George Gershwin's music, both show tunes and extended "serious" works, has been continuously popular ever since it was composed. His reputation, always high, has steadily risen since his premature death, at the age of thirty-eight, in 1937. Yet only in the past decade or so have performers begun to concern themselves with the form in which they present his music. One expects, of course, that with successive changes in taste, show tunes will appear in new, updated arrangements. But Gershwin's extended works—*Rhapsody in Blue*, the Concerto in F, *An American in Paris*, the Second Rhapsody, and *Porgy and Bess*—have been treated with almost equal casualness.

When *Rhapsody in Blue* was given its premiere, in 1924, by the Paul Whiteman band, it was common knowledge that the orchestration had been prepared not by Gershwin himself but by Ferde Grofé, then Whiteman's principal arranger. There were rumors that Grofé, a more respectably trained musician than Gershwin, had also partly composed the work and was largely responsible for its stunning success. The fiercely ambitious Gershwin was stung so badly by these rumors that he immediately set about learning orchestration, and from then on he orchestrated all of his concert works himself. But similar rumors were heard after each Gershwin premiere, right through that of *Porgy and Bess*, in 1935. In the America of the 1920s and even the 1930s the line between "serious" and "non-serious" music was drawn very firmly by the musical establishment, and it seemed almost impossible to believe that someone of Gershwin's knockabout background could actually turn himself into a serious composer who could handle extended forms and even orchestrate his own works.

One effect of these persistent rumors was to encourage not only performers but also publishers to treat Gershwin's works with the casualness I have mentioned. The inflated "symphonic" score of *Rhapsody in Blue* that we almost invari-

ably hear today was not published until 1942 and bears Grofé's name as arranger. The late Frank Campbell-Watson, Gershwin's music editor at Harms, told me several years ago that what Grofé had actually done was not to make a new orchestration of the work but simply to compile all the suggestions for filling in and padding out that conductors and players had scribbled on the rental scores and parts over the years, as the work became more and more popular and was performed by ever larger ensembles. Campbell-Watson himself did a little tampering with the Concerto in F and considerably more with *An American in Paris*, and he hired the composer Robert McBride to recast the score of the Second Rhapsody, explaining that "Gershwin was not a good orchestrator." As for *Porgy and Bess*, the orchestral score has never been published at all, and so performers have felt even freer than with Gershwin's other works to do as they pleased with it.

At last this situation has begun to change. In the early 1970s the pianist Eugene List and the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Samuel Adler,

made the first recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* to use the original 1924 Grofé score since two severely abridged recordings that Gershwin had made with Whiteman in the 1920s. The record (Turnabout TV 34457) was not a success: List's playing is heavily rhetorical, and the Berlin ensemble plays with a deadpan stolidity that makes the *Rhapsody* sound too much like the *Dreigroschenoper*. But it was a step in the right direction.

In 1925 Gershwin had made a piano roll of a solo version of *Rhapsody in Blue*. In 1976 two record producers at CBS had the ingenious idea of covering all the holes on the piano roll which corresponded to notes belonging to the band part, which Gershwin had incorporated into his solo version, so that what remained was the original piano part alone. This was then recorded, with Michael Tilson Thomas conducting a pickup group playing the 1924 score. The resulting performance, though spirited and authentic in sound, was marred by the fact that on the piano roll Gershwin, in fine bravura style, had played some sections of the work much faster than he would ever have done with an orchestra (and faster than he did with Whiteman), and Thomas's group had to do some awkward scuffling to keep up with him. The record (CBS M-34205), which is still in print, is well worth getting, especially since its other side contains a fine performance of *An American in Paris* by Thomas and the New York Philharmonic. (The original Gershwin piano roll is available on Archive of Piano Music X-914 and on Klavier 124.)

Some years ago, with the help of the late Ira Gershwin, Thomas began investigating the Gershwin archives. He has recently issued a new Gershwin record with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, on CBS (LP: IM 39699; compact disc: MK 39699; cassette: IMT 39699). He again uses the 1924 score of *Rhapsody in Blue*, but this time he plays the piano part himself, in addition to conducting. Since his pacing of the work is not controlled by the often breakneck speed of the piano roll, he is free to shape an extraordinarily effective performance that is a full two minutes longer than his earlier one and is very close in spirit to the first Gershwin-Whiteman recording (which is available on RCA AVM1-1740), made in 1924. Unlike many pianists who attempt the *Rhapsody*, Thomas plays for the most part with a lightness, elegance, and wit that match Gershwin's own style rather than with the lugubrious solemn-



ty usually thought appropriate to America's great folk composer. One hopes that this recording will once and for all enforce the point that *Rhapsody in Blue* should be heard only in its original orchestral guise. The Whiteman band of 1924, in addition to a rhythm section and a violin or two, contained only two trumpets, two trombones, and three reeds—though two horns and a couple of extra violins were specially added for *Rhapsody in Blue*. Once one has grown accustomed to the lean, brassy textures of the earlier score, the later one seems intolerably soft-centered and overblown.

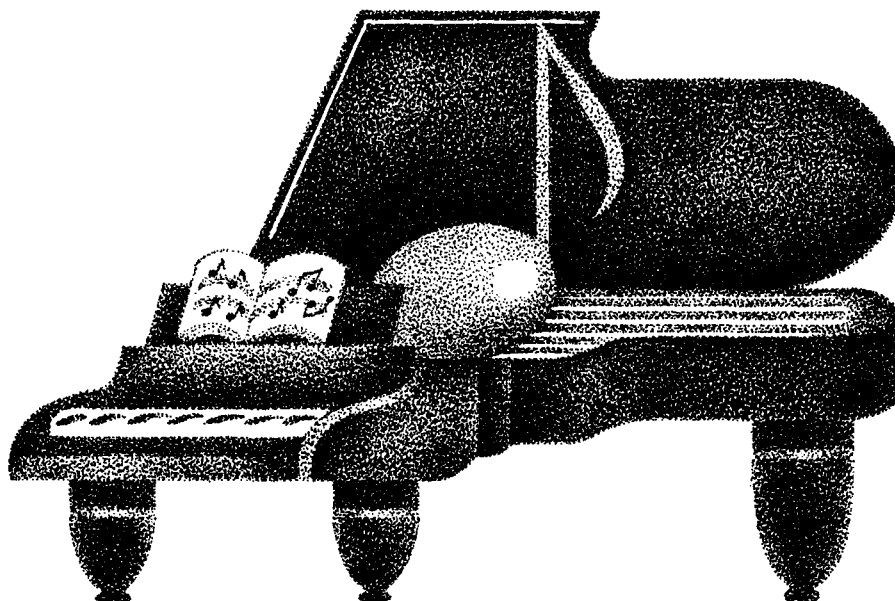
OF THE OTHER WORKS on the new Thomas record, the most important is the seldom heard Second Rhapsody, which was composed in 1931 and given its premiere by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony on January 29, 1932. Thomas has told me that he had remembered hearing, as a child, a concert or broadcast performance of the work and being struck by its extraordinarily dense and contrapuntally intricate orchestral writing, especially by some audacious brass sonorities. But years later, when he wanted to perform it, he discovered that these sonorities were not in the published score. He therefore consulted Gershwin's manuscript score in the Library of Congress, and there he found what he had been looking for. Robert McBride, in preparing the score that was published in 1953, had considerably lightened the orchestration, either thinning out or allotting to woodwinds much of the heavy brass writing that had so intrigued Thomas. In this recording Thomas has returned to Gershwin's original score, and with fine effect, though he unaccountably takes a four-bar cut between rehearsal numbers 39 and 40 (and last summer, in a Tanglewood performance with the Boston Symphony, he inserted a two-minute cadenza at number 17—which seems a bad mistake). The McBride version, which can be heard in an excellent performance by the pianist Jeffrey Siegel and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Slatkin (Vox SVBX-5132), reduces the dramatic contrast between piano and orchestra and smooths out much of the harsh, big-city angularity that was plainly a vital part of the work's conception. Gershwin's original score is certainly the only one that should ever be used, and it undoubtedly will be used more often in the

future, since Warner Brothers Music, which holds the rights, has just withdrawn the McBride score from circulation, at the request of the Gershwin estate.

Yet the Second Rhapsody, which has never been popular, is finally an unsatisfying work—no matter which score is used. Listening to it, one has the feeling that Gershwin was deliberately suppressing his matchless melodic gift in order to concentrate on other aspects of his craft: thematic and rhythmic development and interrelation, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration. The insistent rhythmic figure that dominates the work's first half (Gershwin had at one time considered calling it *Rhapsody in Rivets*) soon grows tedious, and though there is a bluesy middle section, as in *An*

how much (and how quickly) he was learning about his art. Yet it still seems unformed and self-consciously experimental. A few years later, in Gershwin's richly melodic masterpiece, *Porgy and Bess*, all the experiments were to pay off handsomely.

Gershwin made no commercial recording of the Second Rhapsody, but on June 26, 1931, he hired a fifty-five-piece orchestra to rehearse it, so that he could hear how the scoring sounded. The rehearsal was held at one of NBC's New York studios, and Victor Recording Laboratories recorded the final run-through, as a favor to Gershwin. This recording is available on Mark56 641, which also contains off-the-air recordings of Gershwin playing sections of the Concerto in F, another work he never recorded com-



American in Paris, the melody is unmemorable, and Gershwin seems less interested in it than in the ingenious ways in which he can manipulate it. About two thirds of the way through, the Second Rhapsody loses its sense of direction and, as climax is piled on climax, seems to be going on forever. *An American in Paris*, Gershwin's finest orchestral work, has this problem too, and had it much more severely before someone—presumably Walter Damrosch, who conducted the premiere—prevailed upon Gershwin to make four substantial cuts, all of them fairly near the end. Gershwin had trouble with endings, and he had a tendency to become garrulous when things began to go wrong. The Second Rhapsody is a fascinating score to study and crucial to an understanding of Gershwin's development, for it shows

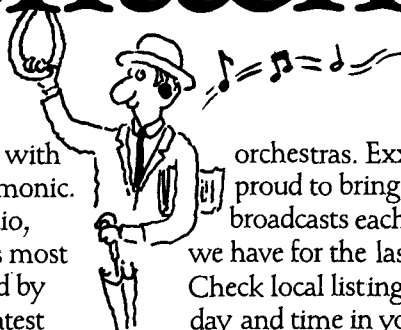
mercially. The record must be ordered from Mark56 Records, P.O. Box 1, Anaheim, California 92805. (A similar pre-premiere rehearsal recording of sections of *Porgy and Bess* is on Mark56 667, and a 1938 broadcast performance of a cut version of the Second Rhapsody, by the pianist Roy Bargy and the Whiteman band, is on Mark56 761.) Gershwin's playing of the Second Rhapsody and the Concerto excerpts, like his playing on the two recordings of *Rhapsody in Blue* with Whiteman, is unique, because of the naturalness and ease with which he moves from the soft and intimate passages to the high-powered, virtuosic ones. No matter how exhibitionistic and technically difficult the writing becomes, he never sounds quite like a concert pianist but always retains the air of a man improvising for his friends at a par-

ty. It is this that separates Gershwin's playing of his own music from other people's playing of it, even from playing as fine as Thomas's often is.

THE OTHER WORK on the Thomas record that we can compare with a Gershwin performance is the Three Preludes of 1926. Early in his career Gershwin made more than a hundred piano rolls (a good sampling is available on Mark56 680). But his only commercial phonograph records were the two *Rhapsody in Blue* performances with White-man, the Andante from *Rhapsody in Blue* as a solo number, several show tunes, and the Three Preludes. In his performance, available on RCA Victrola AVM1-1740 and on the British import Halcyon HDL.101, the total time of the Three Preludes is under five minutes, and they form a neat little sequence: fast, slow, fast. Thomas, by taking the middle prelude at an agonizingly slow *adagio* rather than at the moderate *andante con moto e poco rubato* that Gershwin specifies, not only turns Gershwin's lullaby into a dirge but also destroys the whole work's integrity and stretches its length to over seven minutes. Whereas Gershwin played the simple, bitter-sweet theme of the second prelude with delicate inflection, giving a lift in the middle of each bar to the gently undulating bass pattern beneath it, Thomas drags and lingers and moons. The result is grotesque, a perfect example of the bad old style of Gershwin performance. Thomas does considerably better with the two fast preludes, but he pounds too much and too hard, inserts pompous little pauses here and there, and slows down the final return of the theme in the last prelude. The whole performance strains for more significance than was ever meant to be there. One is at a loss to explain this failure of taste in so sensitive a musician who obviously cares so much about Gershwin's work and intentions.

The remainder of the Thomas record is filled out by five small pieces, some of which he reconstructed from sketches. The charming "Short Story," made up of two pieces that were originally part of the preludes sequence, was arranged for violin and piano by Gershwin and the violinist Samuel Dushkin in 1925 and published in that form the same year. Thomas's elaborate, virtuosic solo piano version loses the intimacy of the original and distorts its shape by repeating, near the end, a brief *agitato* section heard just

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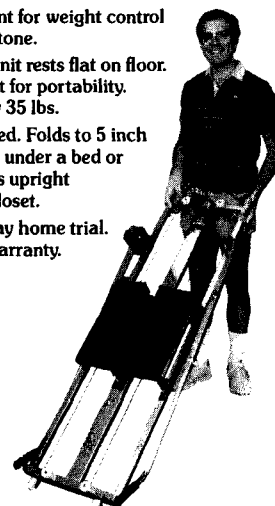
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Photo: Cliff Willis

after the opening. But Thomas's style on the other three solo piano pieces is simpler and more idiomatic. The lovely, touching "Violin Piece," date unknown, was composed, Ira Gershwin told Thomas, as a kind of tribute to the violin pieces, such as Anton Rubinstein's Melody in F, that Gershwin had remembered hearing as a child. "For Lily Pons" (1933) is an inconsequential, rather drifting and impressionistic little nocturne. "Sleepless Night," which is dated 1936 on the Thomas record but is sometimes said to have been part of the preludes sequence of ten years earlier, is a pleasant but repetitious piece that sounds rather like the song "Willow, Weep for Me" (1932)—which, incidentally, was dedicated to Gershwin by its composer, Ann Ronell. Finally there is the wry, angular, utterly delightful "Promenade," written as an instrumental interlude for the 1937 Astaire-Rogers film *Shall We Dance* and also known as "Walking the Dog." It has been published only in a solo piano version (1960), but Thomas presents it in the original chamber-orchestra version used in the film. (A version for full orchestration is included in Slatkin's Vox album.)

The modest, intimate style that Thomas achieves in all the shorter piano pieces except for "Short Story" is also the style of another young pianist, Kevin Cole, who has made a specialty of 1920s and 1930s song literature and of Gershwin in particular. Cole's first record, *The Unknown George Gershwin*, has recently appeared on the Canadian Fanfare label (LP: DFL-7007; cassette: DFC-7007) and is superb. He, too, plays a reconstruction for solo piano of "Short Story," but one that is much closer to the published violin-and-piano version. Whereas Thomas lengthened the piece, Cole shortens it by dropping seven measures. Why not just leave it alone? But Cole's performance, like all those on this record, is very close to Gershwin's own of similar small pieces: more relaxed and improvisatory, less hard-edged and percussive, than Thomas's, yet crisp and full of subtle rhythmic buoyancy. The record is filled out by the overtures to *Lady, Be Good!* (1924) and *Girl Crazy* (1930), a medley of tunes from *Primrose* (1924) and one of waltzes from various shows, and eight little-known but delightful songs. One looks forward to the additional Cole records that Fanfare promises.

As for Gershwin's own solo piano recordings of his songs, four each from

Tip-Toes (1925) and *Oh, Kay!* (1926) are on RCA AVM1-1740, along with the 1924 Whiteman *Rhapsody in Blue*, the Three Preludes, and a 1929 recording of *An American in Paris* conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret but supervised by Gershwin. The same eight songs, plus two more from *Funny Face* (1927), are on Halcyon HDL.101, along with the Three Preludes, *An American in Paris*, the solo version of the Andante from *Rhapsody in Blue*, and the second (1927) Gershwin-Whiteman *Rhapsody in Blue*. (The Halcyon record, if not available through dealers, may be ordered from Roundup Records, P.O. Box 154, North Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140.) More selections from *Funny Face* and some from *Lady, Be Good!*, several of them with Fred and Adele Astaire singing, are on Monmouth-Evergreen MES/7037 and MES/7036, respectively. The company has recently gone bankrupt, but the records can still be found.

It is indeed heartening that the demand for idiomatic and appropriately scaled performances, which began with baroque music and is now reaching up into the nineteenth-century symphonic and solo piano repertoire, has come at last to Gershwin. He is, however, a very difficult composer to get right. What the efforts of Thomas and Cole make clear is that the key to understanding how to perform the large-scale concert works, including *Porgy and Bess*, lies in an understanding of Gershwin's own piano style. As a composer, he had ambitions that carried him well beyond the world of musical theater which gave him his formative experience. But his music, even at its grandest, never completely loses touch with that world. If it is played as though it really were symphonic music or (in the case of *Porgy and Bess*) grand opera, it inevitably sounds pretentious and a little empty. For Gershwin did not actually enter these other worlds; he merely—and very brilliantly and wittily—alluded to them in his large-scale works. The ability that he had, as a solo performer, to rise to virtuosic heights while still sounding like an improvising cabaret pianist must be imaginatively duplicated by any conductor who would make a success of his concert works. That this is not easy to do is evidence that the old line between serious and non-serious music is still a difficult one for most performers to cross. But records like those of Thomas and Cole are encouraging, and give promise of better days ahead for those of us who love Gershwin. □

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FASHION

SHOE CRAZY

BY HOLLY BRUBACH

NEW SHOES CAN'T cure a broken heart, a tension headache, or iron-poor blood, but they can temporarily relieve the symptoms. That shoes can serve as a home remedy—and a highly effective one—is something that women know in their bones and men never seem to learn.

Why shoes? Why not gloves or handbags or hats? In *Shoes Never Lie*, the most comprehensive treatise on shoe fanaticism to date, the cartoonist Mimi Pond theorizes that, given the choice, disconsolate women will buy shoes before anything else, because when you buy shoes, A) you have someone waiting on you at your feet and B) you don't have to look at your pasty-white skin in the dressing-room mirror. Also, C) shoes always fit, no matter what you weigh.

Many men, witnessing the rapport women have with their shoes, sense that they are missing out on something, though they would be hard-pressed to say exactly what. *Women and Shoes*, a one-act play by Nina Shengold, presented in 1984 in New York by Manhattan Punch Line, opens with two men, Willis and Seb, sitting in a bar. Willis says,

I got a question. You ready for this? It's a question. I wanna know how come it is—and I want you should think about this—there's not one single female woman on earth that can walk past a shoe store without looking in. Never happen. I ask myself. You're out there walking, this woman and you, you're out taking the air in a strolling along kind of walking kind of way, or not even. You could be *going* somewhere. You could be walking along with a purpose, some kind of intentional purpose, she's *still* gonna look at that shoe store. Now you could be talking about anything, right, with this woman you're with here, like *sex* you could be talking about and she's still gonna check out those shoes. The day that a woman walks right past a shoe store I tell you, Seb, hell will grow ice pops. Now what I'm intending to ask myself here is just how come this is. Who looks at their feet? *You* look at their feet? I never look at their feet. You ask what my wife stuck

her feet in the last five days running, I have not a clue what my wife stuck her feet in. . . . My wife she got shoes like if there was legs coming out of each pair and a girl coming out of each legs I'd be set up for life. And yet and in spite of all this and in spite of the fact that I don't give a rat butt what shoes she got stuck on her feet that I don't even notice, we walk by a shoe store, that's death. I mean we could be talking about *sports*. Go and figure it. *Shoes*.

Seb concurs:

My wife likes em too.

THE PATHOLOGY OF SHOES

Because psychologists and men have tended to view shoe craving as a crippling addiction, most shoe-dependent women are furtive. Pond documents their techniques for making their closets appear normal, by stashing their



shoes in unlikely places—in the freezer, under the cushions on the sofa, in the oven.

Many men would jump at once to the conclusion that such women are in obvious need of help. But those men are wrong—in part because they have yet to recognize the intricate and varied roles that shoes play in the matrix of our civilization.

SHOES IN LITERATURE

Marcel Proust wrote in *À la Recherche du temps perdu* of the Duke and Duchess de Guermantes, leaving their house on their way to a costume ball. The Duchess, wearing a red dress, is about to get into the carriage when the Duke sees that she is wearing black shoes. He sends her back upstairs to change into red shoes, to match her dress. "Well," he announces to his guests, "we poor, downtrodden husbands, people laugh at us, but we are of some use all the same. But for me, Oriane would have been going out to dinner in black shoes."

SHOES ON THE STAGE

Dona Prouhèze, a beautiful, religious young woman and the heroine of Paul Claudel's *Le Soulier de satin*, is drawn into a liaison with Don Rodrigue, though she is already married—to an impassive, elderly man. For the better part of the play she resists temptation, but by Scene V her resolve is flagging. Knowing full well the disastrous ramifications in both this life and the next, she leaves the house of her husband to consummate her love for Rodrigue, but not before praying to a statue of the Virgin Mary. She takes off one of her shoes. "While there is still time," she says, "holding my heart in one hand and my shoe in the other, I put myself into your hands! Virgin Mother, I give you my shoe!" And she places the shoe in the statue's hand, in order that her progress will be halting and undignified as she runs toward evil. Prouhèze will limp into adultery.

SHOES IN THE MOVIES

In Preston Sturges's classic comedy *The Lady Eve*, Barbara Stanwyck convives to attract the attention of Henry Fonda, an oblivious bachelor millionaire and fellow passenger on an ocean cruise. After watching other female contenders demurely drop their handkerchiefs in front of his table at dinner or try sweetly to engage him in conversation, neither to any avail, the resourceful Stanwyck

sticks out her foot and trips him. He breaks the heel of her shoe. She seizes on his apologetic eagerness to make up for the damage and invites him to her stateroom. "The shoes are in there," she says, gesturing toward a trunk containing fifty pairs. "Because you were so polite, you can pick them out and then put them on, if you like." Fonda selects a pair of high-heeled slingbacks. "Doesn't seem possible for anybody to wear anything . . . that size," he says sheepishly. He slips them on her feet, and then one thing leads to another.

Each of these instances in its own way attests to the power vested in shoes—power to put a wife in her place, to redeem a wayward soul, or to seduce a stranger.

THE SHOE-SEX CONNECTION

Freud and his followers advanced a variety of theories, cited by Valerie Steele in her book *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty From the Victorian Era Through the Jazz Age*, to explain foot fetishism, the sex appeal inherent in the foot, and the sexual significance of shoes. Most of them revolve around the foot, or some part of the foot, such as the heel or the toe, or the entire shoe, as a phallic symbol, except for those times when the shoe could symbolize "the vagina into which the phallic foot is slipped." William A. Rossi, the author of *The Sex Life of the Foot and Shoe*, hypothesizes that "foot and shoe eroticism derive in part from the intrinsic sensitivity of the foot, especially the soles and toes, to tactile stimulation," to quote Steele's paraphrase. Presumably, these theories account for the thrill some men get out of the shoes women wear, but none of them, it seems to me, satisfactorily explains the thrill *women* get out of the shoes they wear. No woman with a normal, healthy shoe drive would content herself with a closetful of phallic symbols. The fact, known to all shoe-crazed women, is that the appeal shoes hold encompasses sex but is not limited to it. When new shoes speak to a woman, the message they whisper in her ear is not a proposition but a promise.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SHOES

From earliest childhood, girls are told stories of other girls who grew up to have shoes change their lives. Cinderella's marriage to a handsome prince turned on a glass slipper that would fit no one's foot but her own. Judy Garland in *The*

Wizard of Oz was given a pair of ruby slippers that could help her get to the Emerald City and, when the time came, transport her instantly back home to Kansas. So it is not surprising that grown women, when they are hoping that their lives will change dramatically, look to shoes.

Not all shoes are empowered to bring about sweeping change, however. Of those that are, some have been designed by Manolo Blahnik, some by Susan Ben-nis and Warren Edwards, others by Salvatore Ferragamo, Vittorio Ricci, Perry Ellis, and Yves Saint Laurent. But the shoes that consistently look as if their range extended to the miraculous are the work of a man who is justifiably famous within fashion circles and virtually unknown outside them: Roger Vivier.

THE FABERGÉ OF SHOES

What Fabergé is to the eggs in the dairy case of your supermarket, Roger Vivier is to the shoes in the window of your local department store. Vivier studied sculpture at the École des Beaux Arts, in Paris. In 1937 he created the shoes for Elsa Schiaparelli's collection; among them was the first platform shoe. In 1947, after several years in New York under the auspices of Delman, a chain

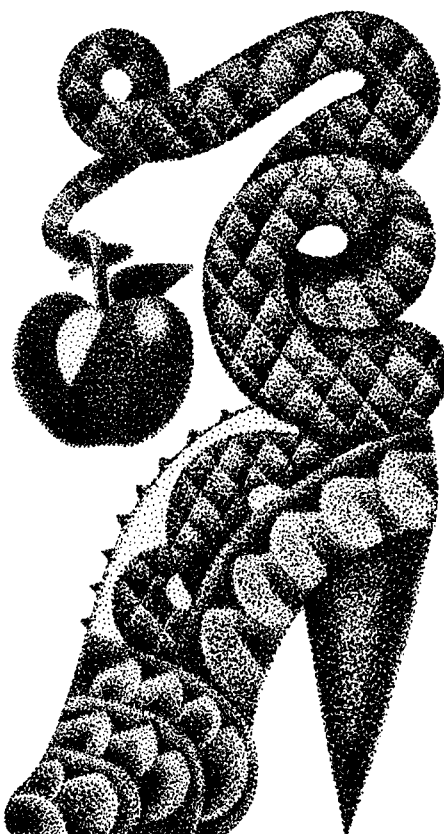
of shoe salons licensed to department stores, Vivier returned to Paris and entered into a collaboration with Christian Dior, designing made-to-order shoes to complement Dior's haute couture. Over the course of his career Vivier has also designed shoes for Balenciaga, Jean Patou, Mme. Grès, André Courrèges, Hermès, Yves Saint Laurent, Emanuel Ungaro, and private clients including Josephine Baker, Maria Callas, Elizabeth Taylor, Rudolf Nureyev, and the Rolling Stones. In 1953 he designed a golden kidskin shoe studded with rubies for the Queen of England on the occasion of her coronation.

It has been sixteen years since Roger Vivier had his own boutique in Paris. But last summer, encouraged by the response to a retrospective exhibition of his shoes mounted by the Facade Gallery, in New York, he opened a boutique on Madison Avenue, where his entire current collection is sold, along with an occasional remake of one of his designs from the past. Come fall, Vivier shoes will be available through some department stores, as well. This is good news for shoe mavens.

SHOES YOU CAN BELIEVE IN: DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Vivier's shoes exhibit a sculptor's pre-occupation with texture and three-dimensional form. He executes paper maquettes as models for certain of his designs. There is nothing mundane about these shoes. They are characterized by seamless vamps and elongated, often flattened toes; a voracious use of materials not ordinarily found in shoes, including unusual leathers like antelope, turtle, and pony skin, and delicate fabrics like silk mousseline, organdy, and panne velvet; and novel heel styles, many of them picturesquely named—the "comma" heel (whose profile is shaped like a comma, curving inward toward the arch), the "spool" heel, the "needle" heel, the "pyramid" heel (with the pyramid inverted), the "escargot" heel (in the shape of a snail). For Marlene Dietrich, Vivier designed the "globe" heel, a narrow high heel with a rhinestone-paved ball at the base.

To any woman of a suggestible turn of mind, Vivier's shoes conjure up a Disney-like image of tiny fairy hands embroidering satin with threads of gold, of squirrels scurrying through the forest bearing a cargo of faceted glass beads, of bluebirds with satin ribbons in their



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beaks, swooping and circling around a fairy-tale heroine's ankles, tying the final bow.

SHOES YOU CAN BELIEVE IN: SOME EXAMPLES

From the dozens of Vivier shoes in the permanent collection of the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, and from the dozens of others that were on display at the Façade Gallery, these few examples may serve to give an idea of the sort of shoes that justify a woman's placing her hopes in them:

From the 1950s, chartreuse silk ottoman pumps with a three-inch heel and a narrow toe that tapers to a squared-off point, the heel and toe covered in ivory satin, embroidered with silver sequins arranged in swirls, and set with rhinestones; Somali leopard-fur pumps, edged in black silk faille, with a black leather heel; tartan-plaid wool-twill slingbacks with an ankle strap, a stiletto heel, and a tasseled brass bow on the vamp; and sky-blue ankle boots covered with blue Chantilly lace and embroidered with blue and white sequins, clear, yellow, and light- and dark-blue beads, with a narrow high heel and a blue satin bow at the front.

From the 1960s, evening shoes of black satin completely covered with hummingbird feathers, with a high convex needle heel; and peach satin pumps inspired by Goya, covered with peach tulle, through which copper threads are woven in a loopy, latticework pattern, with teal blue and gray beading, rhinestones, a narrow pointed toe, and a beaded Louis XV heel.

From the 1970s, red satin shoes inspired by the Duchess de Guermantes, embroidered with red crystal beads, ruby rhinestones, and red crystal paillettes, with a sole in the shape of a mandolin, the square toe as the base; evening shoes of black gauze over clear plastic, embroidered with black jet paillettes, black silk cord knotted to form rosettes, and black bugle beads arranged in a leaf pattern, with pink satin lining the inside and covering the square Louis XV heel; and high boots with a clear plastic vamp, the shaft and heel covered in red satin and embroidered with red metallic thread and ruby paillettes, and ruby headlamp rhinestones at the ankle.

And, from the 1980s, black satin spike-heeled evening shoes with an open toe, a band across the instep, four rhinestone "bracelets" for ankle straps,

and a zipper up the back of the heel; and white low-heeled sandals with straps that cross at the instep and wings, like Mercury's, appliquéd at the heel.

HOW SHOES WORK

That there exists a direct connection between new shoes and an abrupt improvement in a woman's state of mind has long been established, but exactly how that turn for the better comes about is a matter of some speculation. Roger Vivier believes that shoes set off a chain reaction. It is "something very mysterious," he says. "Shoes are in one way very earthy. They are the part of us that touches the ground. And yet by changing a woman's balance, the way she stands, they can change her frame of mind, her spirit, her soul."

An alternative—admittedly far-flung—hypothesis, which a friend and I cooked up as we set out on a recent shoe reconnaissance mission, takes as its basis the "science" of reflexology, which contends that various areas on the sole of the foot correspond to various parts of the body—a spot on the bottom of the big toe to the pituitary gland, the area at the base of the ball of the foot to the stomach, the crest of the metatarsal to the eyes and ears, the rim of the arch to the spinal column. Reflexology seeks, by stimulating these areas on the foot, to restore the body's metabolic balance when it has been upset by injury, illness, or stress.

If reflexology's premise is true, and I am content to think that it is, then it stands neatly to reason that a new pair of shoes would make a woman feel better all over.

But however shoes bring their change about, the women who love them recognize in each other a sameness of approach, a common faith.

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In buying new shoes we signal to the gods that though we are down, we are not yet out. □

MOVIES

BEEN THERE AND BACK

BY TERENCE RAFFERTY

IN A MOVIE INDUSTRY dominated by the dreams of gullible children, ravenous teenagers, and wearily sentimental grown-ups, Alan Rudolph's arty, low-down visions of American life look refreshing and original: his best movies, like the current *Trouble in Mind*, have the sweetness and verve of poems written by a college freshman. They're works that conjure grandly lyrical images out of half-lived experience, that seduce us with a suspect notion of cool—cynical one-liners, cigarette smoke, and the blues. His first picture, *Welcome to L.A.* (1977), was a painful introduction to his rather special sensibility; produced by Robert Altman (for whom Rudolph had been assistant director on several pictures and co-screenwriter of *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*), this multi-character study of alienated Californians was like a somnolent nightmare parody of Altman. His second, *Remember My Name* (1978), was better—an atmospheric revenge melodrama about a woman (Geraldine Chaplin) released from prison who returns to torment her ex-husband. There wasn't much to it, but the simple plot was elegantly and satisfyingly worked out, and the film had an evocative blues score sung by the late Alberta Hunter. And something in Chaplin's unsettling, childlike face seemed to stir the director. The camera kept gazing at her big dark eyes, fascinated by their clouded look of disappointed innocence.

In Rudolph's recent movies that wounded look is on every face, and by distributing it evenly among his actors in the 1984 romantic comedy *Choose Me* (Keith Carradine, Genevieve Bujold, Lesley Ann Warren, and Rae Dawn Chong) and *Trouble in Mind* (Kris Kristofferson, Lori Singer, Carradine and Bujold again, and even Divine), Rudolph manages to turn his fancy conceits of looking for love in a corrupt world into charming, rueful comedies of alienation. *Choose Me* is a moody trifle that gets by without much action, on its piano-bar ambience and low-key eccentricity. Its characters, circling in a smoky hangout called Eve's Lounge, are all romantic

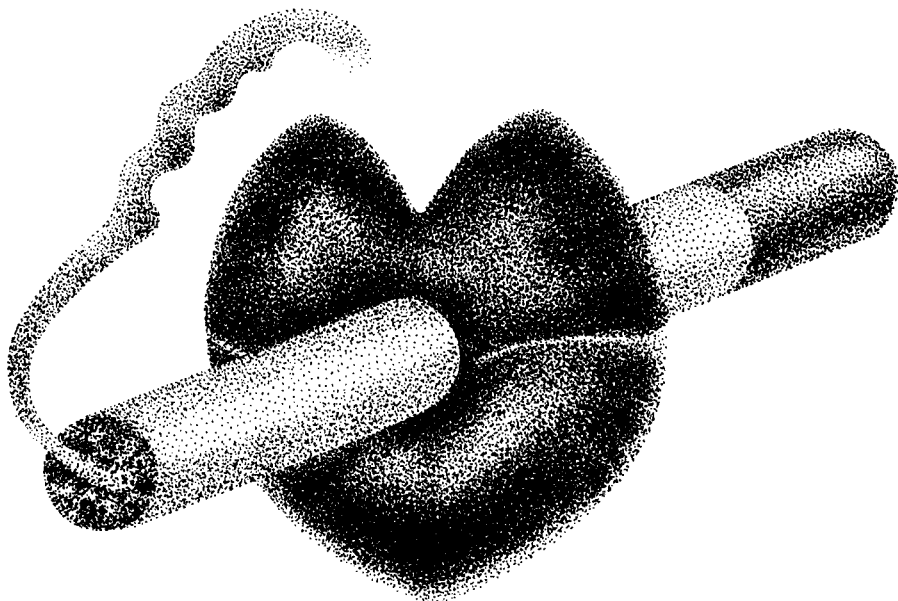
losers who haven't learned their lesson yet, and its plot is just a succession of love triangles whose points keep shifting. Everyone looks dreamy-eyed and self-absorbed from having gone around the block too many times. It's a crowded block, but Rudolph's people, farcically, are always just missing each other.

Rudolph's unique form requires, as farce does, a delicate structure for situations that are broad and basic. *Trouble in Mind* is a very ambitious movie, stuffed with plot and characters—yet it feels as weightless and airy as *Choose Me*. It's not simply the cartoon names (Hawk, Wanda, Coop, Hilly Blue, and a baby called Spike are among the characters in this movie) or the shaggy, slapstick action sequences: the insubstantiality of *Trouble in Mind* is mostly a product of the skewed relationships Rudolph establishes among actors, characters, setting, and story. The world he creates is boldly and sharply drawn but elusive, a shade off the real, like a traced photograph. Seattle, where the film was shot, is called Rain City here, and we're never quite sure if this is just a poetic nickname or is meant to designate a different, imaginary location. Rudolph's images of Rain City have the clarity and shine of a Richard Estes painting, a photo-realist urban

landscape that trembles like a mirage: the slick streets, the weathered buildings, even the battered counter of the local greasy spoon, Wanda's Café (this movie's downscale version of Eve's), are all too vivid, too well defined to be real.

As if to call attention to the scrupulous artificiality of his setting, Rudolph provides his hero, the ex-con Hawk (Kristofferson), with a detailed model of the buildings and streets around Wanda's. Hawk, it seems, made the miniature in the prison shop to help preserve his memories of his old life: now he keeps it next to the window of his room above the café, and when he looks at the messy scenes outside he compares everything with the fastidious, depopulated construction in his room. What he sees from his window—crime, lousy marriages, and an omnipresent militia—does not, however, produce quite as sharp a contrast to the orderly miniature as Rudolph seems to have intended. To our eyes, this chaos looks carefully engineered: Rain City seems, if anything, a rather tidy little *film noir* world, a composition with every drop in place. And the people in this landscape aren't so much characters as elements of the graphic design, art-directed to the eyeballs.

Each person makes such a strong, immediate visual impression that there's barely any room for development. Hawk's forties-style wardrobe of black overcoat and black slouch hat defines him as a man of mystery and old-movie integrity; Georgia (Singer), who's on Hawk's mind, is sweet and guileless, and her blonde hair looks like a cascade of cool, fresh water. Her callow husband, Coop (Carradine), is initially just a



desperate young man stealing money for his family, and he reminds us of Bowie, the Depression-era outlaw that Carradine played in Altman's *Thieves Like Us*; his corruption by big-city crime is indicated by a succession of wild outfits, heavy-metal makeup, and ungodly pompadours. We recognize these figures—along with the bloated epicene crook Hilly Blue (Divine) and the tough broad Wanda (Bujold)—from hundreds of movies, before they even open their mouths. They almost don't have to speak: they're as expressive visually, as stylized and hyperbolic, as the heroes and heroines and villains of silent movies. Singer, the blonde angel, has one scene—in which she abandons and then tries to recover her infant son—that could have been written for Lillian Gish or Janet Gaynor in the twenties.

Even the plot and the dialogue of Rudolph's movie have this antique, emblematic quality: for better or worse, *Trouble in Mind* is a totally consistent vision. For all the frenzied complications, the story is a basic tough-guy romance, the one in which a cynic redeems his past failures through a dangerous act of sacrifice inspired by the love of a good woman, the chance to recapture some past idealism, and so forth. (In this case Hawk saves Georgia's wayward husband from the wrath of Hilly Blue.) This is the sort of thing that, forty years ago, might have been a vehicle for Bogart, and the dialogue is in the gaudy Raymond Chandler style of street-corner aphorisms: "You gotta be nice to your friends . . . without 'em you're a total stranger" (Hawk); "Everyone wants to go to heaven but no one wants to die" (Hilly); "It's a good thing love is blind, or else it'd see too much" (Wanda). On the page Rudolph's notions would seem second-hand, but they have startling life and conviction on the screen. His immersion in discarded movie styles and ideas takes them far beyond pastiche—he almost redeems them.

RUDOLPH'S GLITTERING re-creation of movie archetypes shouldn't work at all, not even once—yet with *Choose Me* and *Trouble in Mind* he has actually brought it off twice in a row, and part of the fun of watching these pictures is in first resisting and then yielding to their unusual sense of style. Rudolph once described what he does as "emotional science fiction," a phrase that (characteristically) means very little while suggesting a lot. These two movies (and, to

a lesser degree, *Remember My Name*) draw us into the meticulously created fantasy world of an alien sensibility. Just as Spielberg, in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *E.T.*, can leave us awestruck at the beauty of a child's imagination, Rudolph at his best can perform wonders with the terrain of the adolescent mind—creating a landscape for the panicky, bigger-than-life images of adulthood dreamed by those who aren't quite there yet. He has a sensitive teenager's feeling for solitude, the attractive dangers of experience, the inevitability of stark, absolute choices, and the necessity of showing a tough front to the world. Adolescents figure that the most sustaining, and sexiest, attitude for an adult is one of languorous disappointment, a cool, careless ease that invites—without advertising it—the most heroic, all-out efforts to arouse the sleeping passions. Rudolph has made himself the geographer of the territory just past innocence, a few miles down the road from Spielbergland, and his movies, no less than *E.T.* and *Close Encounters*, are models constructed from the memory of a particular state of mind, in this case a neighborhood that's run-down but still accessible. The mind of a yearning, self-conscious eighteen-year-old, filled with exaggerated, half-accurate images of life's sorrows, is a pretty embarrassing place to be, but we've all been there. In *Trouble in Mind* Rudolph gets us back to that place so fast—the dark, romantic opening scenes of Hawk's release from prison and reunion with hard-bitten Wanda, as Marianne Faithfull croaks a weary blues song on the soundtrack, tell us exactly where we are—that we laugh, nervously, at our easy attraction to the bogus, funky mood.

Rudolph seems to be working from so deep inside this adolescent consciousness that he doesn't care if we laugh. Still, if he weren't such a graceful, confident director, his notions as a writer would probably look plain silly, and we'd be laughing in derision, not recognition. As overconceived as *Trouble in Mind* and *Choose Me* are, they're not static. He keeps the camera moving, and edits to a drawling, bluesy rhythm that allows us to linger, not on ideas but on faces. And he lets those faces carry the movies. They all seem to be of a certain type, experienced but oddly ageless, with eyes that shoot flashes of youthful hope, intimations of past selves, from mature, been-there countenances. Keith Carradine, who still suggests both

the cheerful, touching kid he played in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* fifteen years ago and the blasé stud he created in *Nashville*, is the perfect Rudolph actor, jaded and juvenile at once. Rudolph's favorite actresses—Bujold, Chaplin, and especially Lesley Ann Warren (who was also in the rowdy, hilarious 1985 country-and-western fable *Songwriter*, directed by Rudolph from a Bud Shrake script)—share, despite their distinct styles, a quality of tenacious girlishness. They have the look of women who know they've been used badly but aren't used up—who seem to have seen it all without having given up hope of finally seeing something good.

Alan Rudolph makes movies as if he'd seen it all too, and were determined to prove that he can use his experience (and his artifice) to make the world look again as it did when we were eighteen and feverishly hopeful. He has had arty failures like *Welcome to L.A.*, a couple of misbegotten commercial projects (*Roadie* and *Endangered Species*), and one very good picture (*Songwriter*) that remains almost unseen because of spotty distribution—a pretty full range of hard Hollywood experience. But he has also seen, first-hand, the miraculous freshness that Altman brought to American movies in the seventies, and he remembers the passionate clarity of silent pictures, *film noir*, blues songs, a few poems and paintings. He constructs his films from these elements, as if to recharge a worn-out present with vivid, personal fantasies of an innocent past. This isn't an approach that's likely to produce great movies—compared with more densely layered examinations of movie innocence and movie experience like Altman's *The Long Good-bye* and Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player*, Rudolph's work is shallow and naive—but he goes all the way with his approach, and that's a rare quality in American movies these days. Although *Trouble in Mind* and *Choose Me* have the solipsism of adolescence as well as the enthusiasm, Rudolph's identification with the hard-lovin' losers in his movies allows him to implicate himself, good-naturedly, in the big joke that he keeps springing on them: they're all drifting in their private worlds, humming the blues to themselves, and it's a lovely, funny surprise for them when they drop the air of mystery and find out they haven't been fooling anyone. They can relax a little, they're clichés, they're transparent: *everybody* knows the trouble they've seen. □

GOODS

A PEN FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

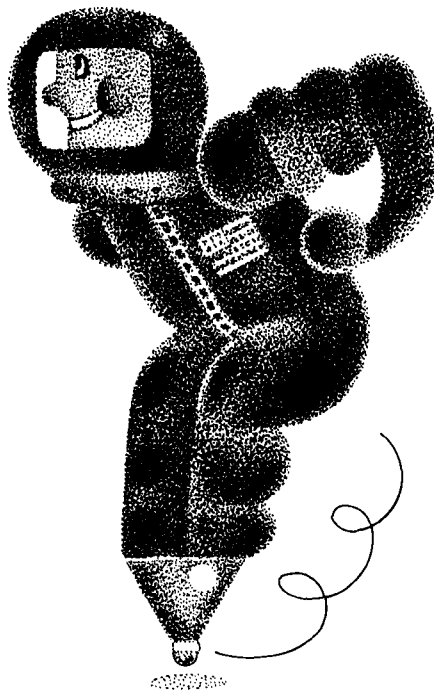
BY BARBARA WALLRAFF

FOR EVERYONE WHO has a frequent need to write in, say, brown ink over grease and at subzero temperatures, or in fine-point green while upside down and underwater, or in orange on a surface whose temperature is above the boiling point, there is really only one choice: the Fisher Space Pen, available with any of twelve colors of ink and in eleven styles, which usually cost from \$2.98 to \$75. For everyone who needs to write in brown ink over grease while upside down, and do it opulently, the choice would be the patented, pressurized Fisher Space Pen cartridge, which also fits Parker pens, in a Parker eighteen-karat solid-gold ball-point, for \$1,750. The rest of us have more decisions to make with respect to fine writing instruments—that is, ones to keep, and keep proudly, rather than use up and throw out. There are now four kinds of pen for general use—fountain, ball-point, porous-point, and roller-ball—plus mechanical pencils and combination instruments. These come from perhaps twenty manufacturers, in hundreds of styles. The Fisher ball-point and the Parker gold pen are near the end points of the price spectrum.

Choosing writing instruments is not the maze of specs and ratings that buying stereo components or even electric kitchen appliances is. No major manufacturer's product is particularly trouble-prone, according to people who repair pens, including George Salustro, of the Bromfield Pen Shop, in Boston, who wouldn't be shy about saying so if one was. Salustro and others say that all makes and styles come in for repairs—and that they show up mostly after their owners have dropped them on their points.

Your local pen store is surely the best place to begin shopping, but you are not limited to the selection you find there, because encyclopedic retail pen catalogues exist. In person or when looking at photographs, try to match pen size to hand size, and choose a fine point for a small hand, a medium point for a larger hand.

LET'S GO OVER the four kinds of pens and the other kinds of instruments. Fountain pens and ball-points have been with us, respectively, for just over a hundred years and just short of fifty. Perhaps all that needs to be said about ball-points is that everyone uses them and no one loves them. Everyone admires fountain pens, it seems, but not everyone finds



them practical. They need to be used frequently, to prevent the ink from drying and clogging the works, and they require more cleaning and more-frequent filling than other pens. And fountain pens have a reputation for leaking on airplanes—in some cases deserved, in others not. (If you travel a lot and have a beloved pen that has failed the test, you might try using ink cartridges and putting in a new one before boarding a plane.) And then, fountain pens turn up at the repair shop more often than other pens, both because their points, being especially heavy, have a predisposition to hit the ground first, and because “a lot of people have forgotten how to use fountain pens,” as George Salustro puts it. That is, sometimes a person

who has trouble cleaning or filling a fountain pen decides that the pen must be broken.

Do these demands and quirks strike you as endearing? If so, you're not alone: retailers say that fountain pens are selling better than ever. Potential buyers should be aware that solid-gold nibs are springier and write more smoothly than gold-plated ones. Gold-plated steel (the plating improves the nib's resistance to corrosion by the acids in the ink) should be your first choice only if you bear down very heavily when you write and thus are likely to bend a gold nib so hard that ink stops flowing. Fourteen-karat gold is standard in good-quality fountain pens, though eighteen-karat is also common and a person who writes with a light hand may prefer it. All the fountain pens named in this article have fourteen- or eighteen-karat gold nibs, which typically are available in four sizes, from extra-fine to broad. Yet another choice a fountain-pen buyer must make has to do with filling method. “Piston” fill, common in German pens, means that the pen fills only from an ink bottle; this is the more old-fashioned and economical method. The “cartridge/converter” system, standard everywhere except Germany, is designed primarily for use with ink cartridges but also allows the pen to be filled directly from the bottle; this is the more flexible and convenient method.

The remaining two kinds of pens are new enough to be thought of as innovations but old enough to have caught on. Porous-point pens and rolling-ball pens first appeared as inexpensive throw-aways. By now, more than twenty years later for porous points and nearly twenty for rolling-balls, each idea has been pretty thoroughly worked out and has acquired a following, and numerous permanent models exist. “Porous-point” is the generic name for a group that includes felt-tips, nylon-tips, and new-and-multisyllabic-tips. These pens share with fountain pens the advantage that they use fluid rather than viscous ink and thus write more smoothly and calligraphically than ball-points, but their soft points wear out—either eventually or promptly, depending on how heavily you bear down when you write. Since porous-points cannot make carbons, and dry out if they're left uncapped, they're hardly an improvement over good old-fashioned fountain pens.

Roller-ball pens also write fluidly, and they are as convenient as ball-points:

they do make carbons, don't dry out readily, and need little special care. They seem the natural choice for a person who doesn't write enough to want a fountain pen. They also seem suited to a person who does write a lot but wants simplicity. Even someone who uses a fountain pen may want a backup that will make carbons. Everyone should at least try a roller-ball.

Mechanical pencils have always been convenient, because they don't require sharpening, but they have become greatly more sophisticated in recent years. This is partly because lead manufacturers have improved and diversified their product. Not many years ago the standard lead thickness was 1.1 millimeters. Now the most usual thickness is 0.5 mm, though leads as plump as 1.18 mm and as slim as 0.2 mm, and pencils to hold them, also exist. Today's 0.5 mm leads come in six colors and, in black, ten hardnesses (a range equivalent to Nos. 1, 2, and 3 plus seven other pencils). Also, the mechanisms for advancing the leads have become simpler to use. A feature called automatic advance, which most manufacturers offer, enables you to get a regulated amount of lead out of the pencil by clicking a button. Faber-Castell's TK-Matic pencils (\$25 and \$35) go this feature one better, advancing the lead for you as you write. A problem that continues to dog virtually all mechanical pencils is their erasers, which are tiny and perched too precariously to let you erase with abandon.

Overlapping these various categories are "convertible" pens from S. T. Dupont, which take either ball-point or porous-point cartridges; Cartier "convertible" pens, Cross Selectip pens, and Sheaffer "dual system" pens, which take either porous-point or roller-ball cartridges; MontBlanc Quickpens, which take ball-point, porous-point, or roller-ball cartridges; and Lamy Twin Pens, Zebra pen/pencils, and the Fisher Triple Action Space Pen, which take ball-point cartridges and 0.5 mm pencil leads at the same time (the Fisher is "triple" by virtue of writing in both black and red ink as well as pencil).

AESTHETICALLY, WRITING instruments seem to divide into three families, which might be called the tycoons, the well-bred family, and the high-tech family. Most manufacturers treat fountain pens as the rich relations—the pencils and so on match them, and not the other way around.

Thus they're the ones to focus on first when making decisions.

The archetypal tycoon instrument is stubby and sturdy, comes in solid colors tending toward black, and is heavy on the gold trim. Perhaps the archetypal manufacturer in this style is MontBlanc, of Germany. MontBlanc bears the further distinction of offering the world's most expensive pen, the eighteen-karat solid-gold Diplomat, at \$6,500. This piston-fill fountain pen, the black-plastic version of it (\$250), and the somewhat smaller Classic (\$200) suit big hands. In the same series MontBlanc also produces the 144 fountain pen (\$150), which takes cartridges or fills from the bottle. Its still-hefty diameter is comparable to those of the series's



ball-point pen and 0.7 mm mechanical pencil (\$85 each). Pelikan, another German firm, produces less-expensive fountain pens, ball-points, and 0.7 mm pencils in a broader range of colors.

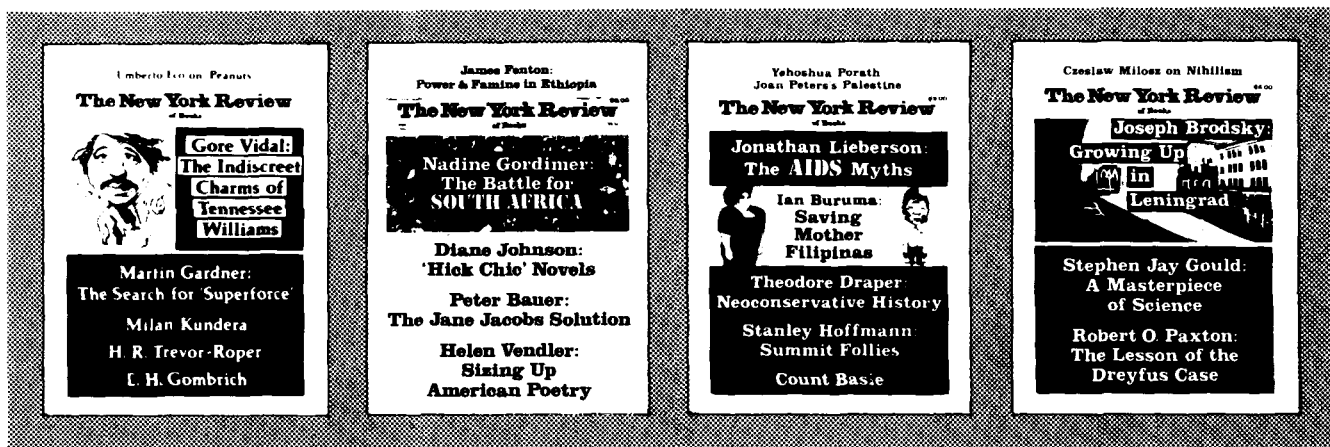
Most instruments from most manufacturers, except German ones, belong to the well-bred family, whose members are slimmer and more elegant, and come in a variety of finishes, primarily lacquer and metal. Probably the most beautiful lacquers are those from Waterman (in the Gentleman and Executive series) and S. T. Dupont, with Cartier as a runner-up. Waterman, though it began in New York and was named after Lewis Edson Waterman, the American inventor of the fountain pen, is now a French firm (these days even Parker manufac-

tures its better-quality instruments in France). Waterman recently came out with a fountain pen and a ball-point in wood (\$400 and \$225). Also, a company named Reform makes a graceful fountain pen from briarwood, with an eighteen-karat nib (\$250); unfortunately, there are no matching companion instruments. Cross has a relative bargain for those who like the feel and the idea of solid gold: a fourteen-karat fountain pen for \$800 and a ball-point and a pencil for \$500 apiece. An absolute bargain is available from Sheaffer, and George Salustro swears by it: the Triumph 550 fountain pen, with a fourteen-karat nib, at about \$36.

Intermarriages between the tycoons and the well-breds have produced the Parker 75 series (Salustro's all-around favorite); the Sheaffer Connaisseur 810 series, whose fountain pen is offered with a choice of fine or medium nib only; Italian Omas pens; and the Waterman Le Man series. Waterman's top-of-the-line Le Man 100 fountain pen (\$225) offers a choice of *seven* sizes of eighteen-karat gold nib; to match it there are a ball-point, a porous-point, and a 0.7 mm pencil.

Although many of these companies offer a few streamlined, modern-looking designs, mostly in the lower price brackets, the German firm Lamy leads the way to the high-tech aesthetic. Besides innovative designs, Lamy offers some unusual kinds of writing instruments, including three-color and four-color ball-points (\$45) and the Twin Pen pen-and-pencil combination (\$40), in various finishes. Lamy is also notable for manufacturing a full range of instruments, including the Ink Writer rolling-ball pen and both 0.5 mm and 0.7 mm pencils, in most styles. High-tech aesthetics also come from Ferrari, which offers racy-looking fountain pens, ball-points, and roller-balls, but no pencils. And there's Fisher, with its Space Pens, Triple Action and otherwise, and a pencil to match one of them.

All of the writing instruments described above are available by mail from The International Pen Shop at Arthur Brown and Bro., Inc., 2 West 46th Street, New York, New York 10036, (212) 575-5555, or Fahrney's Pens, Inc., 8329 Old Marlboro Pike, P13, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772, (301) 568-6552. Fahrney's offers discounts on some MontBlanc pens and runs special offers for some other lines. Both companies do engraving and make repairs. □



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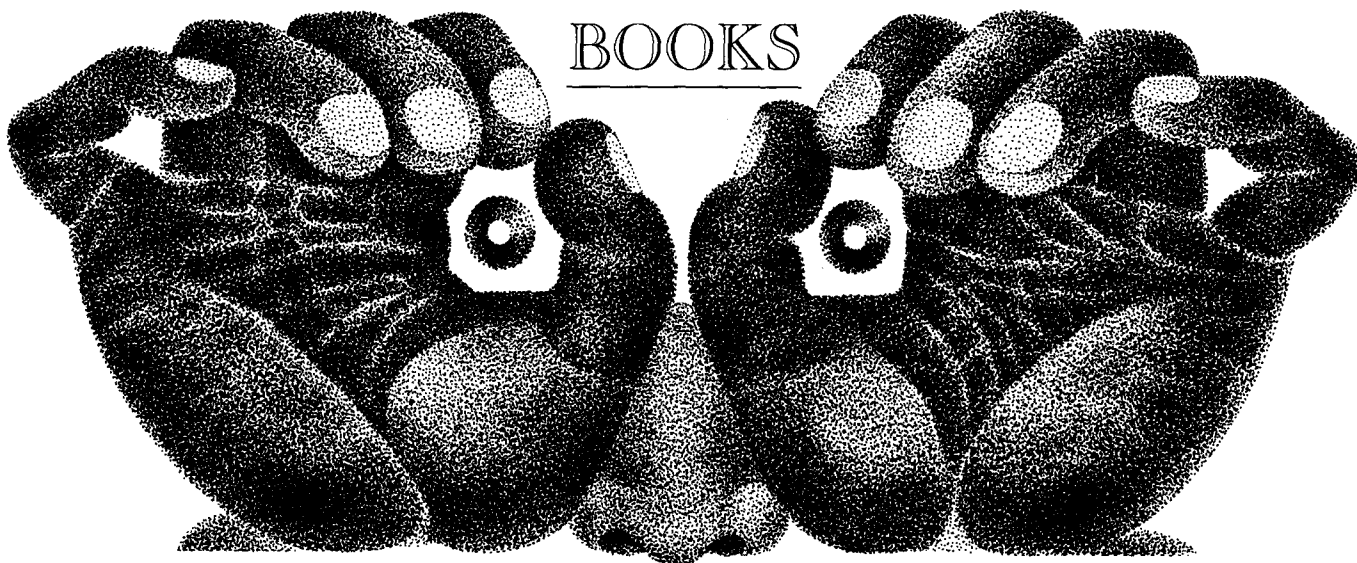
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OUT IN THE COLD

BY LLOYD ROSE

A PERFECT SPY

by John le Carré. Knopf, \$18.95.

JOHN LE CARRÉ'S journey as a novelist has been a downward spiral into disillusionment—with England, with Western society in general, with the idea that political systems will ever accomplish anything worthwhile—and he's taken his most famous character, the bemused, brilliant spy George Smiley, with him. On the last pages of *Smiley's People*, at the end of the long saga le Carré has written for him (five novels, stretching over nineteen years), Smiley stands in the snowy night next to the Berlin Wall and realizes that in some terrible way he has become the archenemy he has just run to ground—Karla, the Soviet master spy whose ruthless methods Smiley, the man of conscience, has been willing to adopt in order to ruin him. Smiley has been at the Wall before. He saw Alec Leamas shot down there in *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*. Earlier in that book Control, the head of the Circus (le Carré's rather heavily ironic nickname for his British Secret Service), tells Leamas, "We do disagreeable things so that ordinary people here and elsewhere can sleep safely in their beds at night. Is that too romantic? Of course, we occasionally do very wicked things." He grinned like a schoolboy." What Smiley, who inherited Control's position, has learned is the simple, almost primitive, lesson that you cannot do evil and remain good. His profession has destroyed him.

It's not surprising that le Carré aban-

doned Smiley after *Smiley's People*: there was no one left to write about. In his latest novel, *A Perfect Spy*, le Carré has taken for his protagonist a man with no moral center at all, only a desire to manipulate, to gain admiration and power at any cost, so long as someone else pays. The means have become the end, and George Smiley the hero has become Magnus Pym the psychopath.

For his concentration on the inner price to the individual who plays the "Great Game" of international espionage, le Carré has been compared to Conrad. He invites the comparison by borrowing Conradian names (Kurtz in *The Little Drummer Girl*; Marlow and Axel in *A Perfect Spy*) and echoing famous passages (in *Smiley's People*, Smiley thinks of himself and Karla in an image from "The Secret Sharer"). But he hasn't the same understanding of political and social complexity. Journeying with Conrad into the various hearts of imperialist darkness, we lose our moral way—in the places where we end up, good and evil as we know them not only don't apply, they don't even make much sense. When le Carré, in *The Little Drummer Girl*, attempts to educate us as to the legitimacy and illegitimacy of the claims on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he ends by making the two camps seem identical: their aims may differ, but their methods have turned them into twins. When he does this with Smiley and Karla it is, if not quite believable, at least spooky and disturbing—he touches on the fear we all have that we may become what we hate. But on the political level it's unconvincing and ineffective, more a plague-on-both-your-houses judgment than an examination of political reality.

In fact—with his complicated plots, moral indignation, and vivid, sometimes eccentric characterizations—le Carré resembles not Conrad but Dickens. There's some of Kipling in him, too, in his fascination with non-English societies and his attempts to define and, on one level, to defend Englishness. This is the tradition he belongs to: the great English storytellers, with their liveliness and moral lessons. There's something a little vulgar about this tradition, something nannyish and scolding, which Kipling was undone by and Dickens, with his protean genius, transcended (as Shaw transcended it, by wit, on the stage). But it's precisely le Carré's middlebrow qualities—the earnest moralizing, the sentimental fondness for Smiley—that have helped to make him popular.

For le Carré's secret world isn't constructed to make the reader feel comfortably at home; it's repellent and unsettling. The lies and false identities and continual betrayals are the shiftings of a reality that has no center. Nothing can really be known. Le Carré has taken this quintessentially twentieth-century point of view, with all its irony and despair, and wedded it to the thriller: he's a pulp modernist. His Circus of backstabbing career men, petty mysteries, and ugly jostlings for power is one of Kafka's nightmare bureaucracies domesticated and made hideously familiar. In this hell Smiley is our reliably human guide. He's a literary throwback (and this is what separates le Carré from Graham Greene) to the heroes of classic English detective fiction—men like Sherlock Holmes and Peter Wimsey, who knew who they were and what they stood for. The difference between the detective and the espio-

nage novel is the difference between the nineteenth and the twentieth century, between a world of certainty and stability, in which murder was an aberration and the solving of a crime the solution to an elegant puzzle, and one of chaos, in which murder is commonplace and life itself a puzzle. In this sense Smiley is a nineteenth-century man. He maintains his moral outlook: even corrupted, he can mourn his corruption. It's why we, and his creator, care about him.

IT'S HARD TO care about Magnus Pym, father-obsessed double agent and professional betrayer. Le Carré devotes more than 400 pages to him, but he doesn't seem moved by him: he treats him more as a case history than as an object of sympathy. The novel begins when Pym, a highly placed British agent, is discovered to be working for the Czechs, as well. He goes into hiding, and as his old mentor, Jack Brotherhood, searches for him and tries to figure out what damage he's done, Le Carré takes us through Pym's past to show us who he is and how he got that way. Le Carré has turned away completely from the wide-open geographical and political spaces of *The Little Drummer Girl*; *A Perfect Spy* is about the inside of a man's head, about his soul.

Although Brotherhood's investigations give the novel a suspense, puzzle-solving structure, it's essentially a psychological study. Pym's relationship to his con-man father, whom he both admires and loathes, is given as the explanation for his spiritual emptiness. By becoming a government-sanctioned con man, a spy, Pym follows in his father's footsteps; by betraying those for whom he works, specifically his two surrogate fathers, Jack Brotherhood and Axel Hampel (code-named Poppy), he re-venge himself.

The story sounds as if it should work—it's cleverly designed—but written out it isn't very satisfying. The tendency Le Carré has always had to divide his characters into good guys and bad guys suggests the problem. His sense of character is static: people are what they are. This isn't necessarily a drawback—it was Dickens's idea of character too—but it's death to a psychological novel. We don't so much watch Pym change as watch him as a boy suffer from his father over and over again, and as a man play out over and over again his revenge. The same events keep turning up in different hats. This was true in the Smiley novels,



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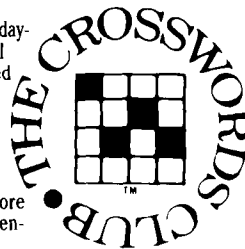
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too; but because it was fun to see how Smiley would tackle the problems, there was a pleasure in the sameness. With Pym we've gotten the point long before le Carré quits making it.

A Perfect Spy also suffers from le Carré's hero-worship of his male characters. Even with Smiley there was a bit too much of Toby Esterhase crowing about what a genius George was. But Smiley was at least conceived in an anti-heroic mode—fat, shy, a cuckold. The men in *A Perfect Spy* are all larger than life: Pym the superspy; the crippled, heroic survivor Axel; Pym's compellingly selfish father; and largest of all Jack Brotherhood, whom Pym describes without irony as "a straight-backed English brave of the officer class, the one who keeps his head when all about him are losing theirs." To the reader, Brotherhood may seem more like a joke: keeping hysterical women in their place and knocking around homosexuals, he's like a parody of Raymond Chandler's tough-guy dick Philip Marlowe. Far more interesting, and more convincingly tough, is the reprehensible upper-class cad and pederast Sefton Boyd, a man so horrid that it's almost impossible not to fall for him. Le Carré's portrait of Pym's supposedly charming father, who comes off rather talky and transparent, could have used some of Boyd's rotten magnetism.

Pym himself is too shallow to hold our interest or sympathy. Yet his failure as a character is perhaps the inevitable result of le Carré's integrity. Smiley, with his simple virtue and courage, was really a boys'-book hero. Le Carré's conception of the world was always more sophisticated and harsher than his conception of Smiley, and the longer he wrote about him the more difficult it became to reconcile him with that world in any honest way. He finally had to leave him behind. As a character, Jack Brotherhood may be just as corny-heroic, but he's not at the center of le Carré's story. The center is Pym, of whom le Carré can write, after Pym has sold Axel to the British, "How Pym loved Axel in the weeks that followed!" In *The Honourable Schoolboy* Connie Sachs quotes Steed-Asprey ("Or was it Control?"), one of the founders of the Service: "'We're fighting for the survival of Reasonable Man.'" But the fight has killed what it was meant to preserve. Smiley is gone, and in his place is Magnus Pym, the hollow man without honor or loyalty and with no purpose but to deceive: the perfect spy. □

THE NEW FACE OF TOIL

BY JAMES FALLOWS

BRAVE NEW WORKPLACE
by Robert Howard. Viking, \$16.95.

AS AMERICA'S ECONOMIC complacency has eroded, its regard for big, powerful machines has increased. Nearly every proposal for improving the economy starts with a lecture about the need to raise the industrial-productivity rate. Inventing and installing new machines are not the only ways to do this, but they come high on most lists. What was the American steel industry's sin, if not its delay in turning to continuous casters? When the Japanese are envied for their high savings rate, it is mainly because their frugality leaves them with extra money to invest in advanced production equipment.

Today's renewed enthusiasm for applied technology is only one side of a familiar pro-and-con discourse in American life. The practical-minded Yankee culture long embraced the machine as the surest way to prosperity, even while worrying about its unsettling side effects. Fifteen years ago, when the problem of creating wealth seemed to have been solved, attention was focused on the side effects. Now, in the lengthening shadow of Nippon, worries about too rapid growth seem like luxuries of an innocent bygone age.

The cautions about technology have traditionally fallen into three categories. One is environmental: How can we cope with nuclear waste products, sulfurous emissions, the buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and threats to the tropical woodlands? In the past the world has avoided Club of Rome-style environmental disasters mainly through further technological tinkering. Eighty years ago the United States seemed in danger of deforestation because of the increasing demand for railroad ties and lumber to build frontier towns. When the price of wood began to climb, people found ways to conserve, and today the United States is more heavily wooded than it was at the turn of the century. But environmental effects are not always so nicely reversible (England lost its forests and never regained them), and the persistence of radioactive material gives new meaning to the idea of irreversibili-

ty and the need for environmental control.

The second category of objection is aesthetic: Life grows less lovely when shaped by the machine. Wasn't Main Street nicer than these ugly new malls? Didn't the berries taste better when they came fresh from the farm? America's most eloquent anti-technological aestheticians have been Henry Adams and Lewis Mumford. More recently a political scientist named Langdon Winner has published a series of essays, collected in *The Whale and the Reactor*, warning that we are embracing new technologies, notably the computer, without stopping to think how they may alter our daily lives. Like Adams and Mumford, Winner sees the alteration as baleful. Also like them, he does not dwell on trade imbalances and productivity rates. In this view economic "growth," as measured by the gross national product, is a narrow and misleading concept, and a nation can easily make itself poor in all the important ways while imagining that it has grown rich.

The third category represents a more distilled political ideology. Its objection to new machines is not that they change society but that they leave it the same. Each invention represents merely a new weapon in the endless struggle between labor and management for social and economic control.

This line of reasoning, which was started in earnest by Karl Marx, was well summed up a decade ago in Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. Braverman argued that the workplace was, always and inescapably, a battle zone (always, that is, under capitalism). Managers, guided by the time-and-motion studies carried out by Frederick Winslow Taylor, constantly sought to increase their control over the pace and nature of work and to reduce the workers' discretion. Workers constantly fought back. If technology allowed a machine to perform tasks for which a skilled worker had previously been necessary, the machine would strengthen the manager's hand and leave the worker powerless and "de-skilled."

The finest piece of writing to come from this school was David Noble's *Forces of Production*, a history of the machine-tool industry which was published in 1984. Noble emphasized that technical innovation was not good or bad in itself; its worth depended on how it was applied in the workplace. For example,

when computerization came to the machine shop after the Second World War, managers had to decide between two approaches for automating their equipment. Noble demonstrated that the choice between the systems turned not on their engineering or economic merits but on in-house politics. One approach ("record-playback") left the machinists in control of the machines, while the other ("numerical control") transferred power to programmers who worked at desks, not on the shop floor.

Robert Howard's *Brave New Workplace* is a reportorial work that shares the Braverman-Noble perspective. Indeed, its obvious lineage is responsible for my main complaint about the book. Howard explicates Taylorism but never mentions Harry Braverman. He talks about numerically controlled machine tools but not about David Noble. In a dozen ways he shows that he has drawn from both men's work, and from that of Barry Bluestone, Bennett Harrison, Harley Shaiken, and Robert Kuttner, among others, but none of their names appears in his book. He studs his discussion with talk of "contradiction" and "crisis" but does not mention Karl Marx. Perhaps these omissions are merely an unforeseen consequence of Howard's decision to dispense with source notes altogether; perhaps he was striving to produce an unencumbered, readable book. Whatever the reason, the result is weird and vaguely insulting to the reader, as if someone had written a book about Robert Moses without mentioning the fact that Robert Caro had already said a few words on the subject.

Howard, a young journalist and man of the left, bases his book on interviews about and investigations of high tech in America's industries. He intends his material to advance two themes. One is that the newest wave of technology is being misused in the same old struggle over power and submission in the workplace; the other, that the struggle is doomed to continue, despite the new American ideal of flexible, cooperative working arrangements. The rise of spiffy-looking no-smokestack offices where secretaries call their bosses by their first names should not blind us to the realities, Howard says.

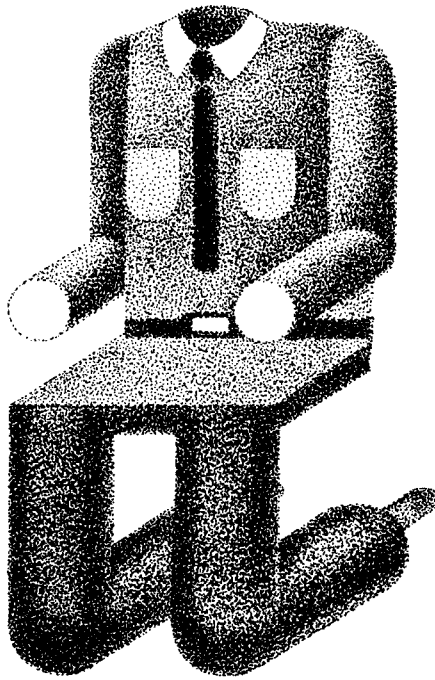
The essential fact [is] that work in America is a relationship of unequal power, that conflicts of interest are endemic to working life, and that this new model of the corporation, much like the old, is founded on the sys-

tematic denial of influence and control to the large majority of working Americans.

To Americans at large, computers may have come to stand for industrial renaissance, but for managers they represent

nothing less than the welcome realization of an ideal that has tempted industrial managers throughout much of the twentieth century—a captivating image of the workplace as a realm of perfect control.

Howard's evidence for his claims consists of vivid journalistic portraits of working life in the industries most affected by technological change. Some of his stories concern health and safety: one fifty-four-year-old woman, exposed



to a variety of esoteric chemicals during her tenure at a scientific-instruments plant, became so "sensitized" that she broke out in a rash when exposed to anything from store-bought bread to metal clasps on pants. "My doctor," she tells me, "says I'm allergic to the twentieth century." Howard also provides familiar illustrations of jobs that have been eliminated by automation, though he admits that new jobs may have been created elsewhere.

BY FAR HIS MOST powerful material concerns the use of the new technology for plain oppression. As more and more clerical work has been shifted to computers, larger and larger numbers of people have discovered that their work

may be automatically monitored from afar. As Howard describes it, this possibility has been exploited with a single-minded fixation on numbers that makes the Vietnam body count seem a marvel of flexibly subtle thinking. He draws his examples from business operations—banking, insurance, accounting, and the telephone system—that are ideally suited to computerized monitoring.

For example, Howard describes how computerization changed life in the revenue-accounting department of Texas International Airlines. The company hired a computer consultant to observe the work of some 130 clerks in its accounting office, mainly women, as they riffled through flight coupons and tabulated revenues. Howard says that the consultant operated surreptitiously, without informing the clerks that he was trying to design a system to streamline and "rationalize" their work. Once the consultant had finished his report and the computerized system was in place, it enabled supervisors to keep minute track of how many tickets each clerk was processing each day.

On their productivity print-outs the supervisors could discern an alarming pattern: "Office productivity would dip, like clockwork, at the same two points of every day—around nine in the morning and three in the afternoon." The problem was the company's "flextime" policy, which allowed employees to arrive for work any time between six and nine in the morning and leave nine hours later.

When the last of the office workers arrived at nine, those who had been working since six would stop to say hello. Productivity, says Taylor [the consultant], would plummet. And when those who had been working since six left at three, the same thing would happen again. "So," says Steve Taylor matter-of-factly, "management decided to cut back on their flex-time."

When a similar but more onerous system was imposed on telephone operators, it produced print-outs of each operator's performance for each quarter hour; apparently, it allowed supervisors to determine who had been working hard enough to deserve a bathroom break. At a Southwestern Bell installation in Houston, clerks were given video-display terminals for routine work but were discouraged from using the Tutor program that would teach them the computer's full capacities. "You could learn anything—the sky's the limit—if only

May report on

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they'd let you," one clerk told Howard after she had tried Tutor. "I could learn things even some of the engineers didn't know." The clerk had discovered Tutor's password by chance; her supervisor had kept it secret.

Obviously, businesses have a right to insist on certain standards of performance, but Howard convincingly argues that this kind of small-minded, dehumanizing control does not advance anyone's legitimate ends. Computers can be instruments of broader human possibility as well as greater efficiency, he says, but not when they are used for pettifogging Taylorist control. (He points out that writers and editors love their computers and rarely complain of eye fatigue or back strain, because for them machines mean independence. To the insurance clerk who knows that each keystroke is being counted and timed, the new technology presents a different face.)

In the computerized workplace, workers need *more* access to information, . . . more integrated jobs, and *more* autonomy. . . . The effective computerization of work depends upon *motivated* workers who are willing to adapt to new technology, to perform their jobs responsibly, to persist in the face of abstract tasks.

The more a company denies its employees reasonable liberties, Howard says, the more it deprives itself of their best efforts and the full efficiency of the machinery.

Monitoring often does not even serve the narrowest ends of economic efficiency that are its ostensible justification. One Citibank supervisor, for example, tells the story of a two-minute 'average working time' placed on all calls to customer representatives at the bank's bank-card processing center in South Dakota. What happened was that as workers anxiously approached the end of the time limit on each call, they would hang up on their customers whether the conversation was completed or not. . . . Yet no matter what misgivings about monitoring individual managers might have, the temptation—and the pressure—to rely on such quantitative data is enormous and virtually irresistible.

In keeping with his idea of constant struggle in the workplace and of managers' insistence on even economically ruinous forms of control, Howard holds out no hope that companies will grow more flexible on their own. He claims that management will yield only in the

face of superior force and that the force can come only from workers united. Therefore, he presents at the end of his book something truly novel these days: specific suggestions for the renaissance of labor unions.

If unions are to avoid going the way of the Whigs, Howard says, they must adjust their vision to the real source of discontent for today's workers. During the Depression, unions could base an organizing crusade on questions of pay, security, and representation. Pay and seniority will always matter, but Howard says that control of workplace technology may be the only cause that can motivate people to join unions once again.

The solution today may prove to be much the same as it was fifty years ago: to create a social movement with the vision and the power to make the brave new workplace serve more social ends, much as industrial unionism did for the mass production economy.

Howard is so enthusiastic about the potential of a revived union movement that he careens into the realm of neo-liberalism in describing its virtues. If organized labor could make technology seem less threatening, he says, it could help the whole economy adopt new machinery that much more quickly. But he does not sound sincere when discussing cooperative arrangements from which everyone might benefit; endless, grueling struggle in the workplace is at the heart of his social idea. All that is necessary—or possible—in his view is to make it a more equal fight.

What if you do not share this fundamentally Marxist vision? What if you are convinced by Howard's illustrations but also believe that the American companies with the most adversarial labor-management relations have been among the first to succumb to competition from abroad? (*Exports, imports, balance of trade*, and *Japan* do not appear in the index to this book; *Japanese management*, which does, gets two one-line references in the text.)

Could a revived labor movement bridle misused technology without turning every factory into Northern Ireland? Could it fight for control of technology without fighting over everything else?

To Robert Howard, I suspect, these would seem silly and sentimental questions, since the answer is obviously no. In his call for a newly militant labor movement he seems almost nostalgic for the days when a boss was a boss, a scab

was a scab, and no one was confused about fighting the good fight. Because so many unionists joined the bloody strike-breaking fights at the turn of the century and the political battles that climaxed during the New Deal, American capitalism was humanized and American workers prospered in the 1950s and 1960s. But is it any disrespect to the memory of Reuther, Lewis, and even Haywood to suggest that today's struggles are different, and that American labor and management are both endangered by competition from overseas? Perhaps a recognition of shared interests and vulnerabilities would do more than a renewed class war to curb the abuses that Howard has documented. □

BRIEF REVIEWS



THE GOLDEN GATE by Vikram Seth. Random House, \$17.95. Mr. Seth's novel describes the amorous maneuvers of a quintet of San Franciscans. They are people in their twenties, bright, well educated, and capable—the sort currently tagged with the unlovely name of yuppies. (It sounds like something to eat, probably containing marshmallows.) The story covers the process, sometimes painful, sometimes very funny, by which these characters abandon dreams of ideal romance—"the ghosts that keep the world alive"—to settle for available reality, and it is a tale told with wit and psychological shrewdness, from a thoroughly civilized point of view. It is also wildly daring. Lapsing from his role of impersonal narrator, the author reports an encounter with an editorial type who

... seized my arm: "Dear fellow,
What's your next work?" "A novel . . ."
"Great!"

We hope that you, dear Mr. Seth—"
" . . . In verse," I added. He turned
yellow.

"How marvelously quaint," he said,
And subsequently cut me dead.

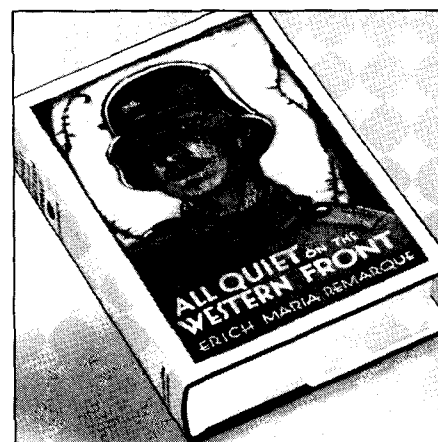
He—whoever he was—was misguided. There is nothing quaint about Mr. Seth's fast, crisp, thoroughly contemporary novel in verse. As a narrative medium, verse has great merit. The author who has committed himself to a set pattern of rhyme and meter is not tempted to windy divaga-

tions, and the reader is not tempted to skip in the justified belief that matters on page 210 will be exactly where he left them on page 205. In this novel every word counts.

RED DAWN AT LEXINGTON by Louis Birnbaum. Houghton Mifflin, \$18.95. The late Louis Birnbaum, who was a highly respected history teacher at the pre-college level, must have located, and used, every surviving record, letter, and diary concerning the opening years of the American Revolution. The quantity of information he collected is enormous, and it represents a staggering amount of research. Its presentation, however, is rather like a haystack. Everything is there, but except for the simple order imposed by chronology, facts are offered with no discernible plan and no distinction between the important and the trivial. The ideal reader for this history is probably one who knows nothing about the Revolution except that it happened, and who will therefore find all the information equally interesting.

THE NEW PAINTING: Impressionism 1874–1886 edited by Charles S. Moffet. University of Washington, \$40.00 to July 1, \$60.00 thereafter. This volume is, in effect, the catalogue of an exhibition displaying, in order, paintings that appeared in the various shows held, in defiance of the officially controlled salons, by the group of independent and experimental artists who acquired the en bloc label of Impressionists, although in fact they were by no means in agreement about their aims or their methods. The paintings, well reproduced in color, range from the famous and familiar to the now relatively obscure. The accompanying text is remarkably enlightening. It combines essays by Mr. Moffet and his several associates with a contemporary defense of the "new painting" by Stéphane Mallarmé and many quotations from the critics and reviewers of the time. This assorted material explains to a modern viewer what caused his great-grandfather to recoil in horror from paintings now considered the glory of their period. One has a genuine, and exciting, view into the past.

ON PERSEPHONE'S ISLAND by Mary Taylor Simeti. Knopf, \$18.95. Mrs. Simeti's "Sicilian Journal" covers a year on the island—not the calendar year but the old agricultural progress from one grape harvest to the next. Along the way there are traditional festivals and religious celebrations, excursions to ruins, investigations



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Down. 1. S(C)OW 2. D(E-ADE)YE 3. WIN(C)E 4. ONCE (anag.) 5. G-EW-GAWS (*swag we* rev.) 6. TWO-WAY (homophone) 8. WISE (homophone) 9. ON-USES 10. PENTADS (anag.) 12. W-HEW 13. TO-UTE-D 18. PO(WW)OWS (*woop* rev.) 19. (s)NAPPING 20. P-EANUT (*p* + anag.) 21. WIND-BAG (*gab* rev.) 22. SEE-SAW (*was* rev.) 23. S(EA)WAY 26. W(I-DO)W 27. DEF-T 29. DATE (double def.) 30. W-OWS (*w* + anag.) 31. N-YET

S	I	D	E	W	O	N	G	T	C	W	O	P
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S	W	E	W	Y	G	A	S	W	I	G	H	T

ACROSTIC NO. 9

"You can hear much unrhymed poetry in the air of America—in the singsong chant of the auctioneers, the jargon of the truckers on the CB radio, the bawdy jokes of construction workers, . . . the extravagant tale-telling of tipsy strangers in a bar."

—On the Road With Charles Kuralt

of local history, and Mafia murders. The author, who evidently has a passion for plants, displays a deft touch with scenic description and an amiably unsentimental view of country neighbors who are as wily as they are picturesque. Overall, she describes a borderline situation—a beautiful country in which past and present collide rather than merge, and where families like her own live fairly comfortably in what amounts to a war zone.

DEADWOOD by Pete Dexter. *Random House*, \$17.95. Mr. Dexter's Deadwood is inhabited by the likes of Wild Bill Hickock, Calamity Jane, Pink Buford's bulldog, and Bill's friend Charlie, who thinks the town distinctly odd. "I never been anywhere . . . that so many people were walking around carrying spare heads." The spare heads are merely the start of a string of episodes of bizarre violence which the citizens of Deadwood tolerate with equally bizarre phlegm. The contrast between action and reaction, or rather lack of it, is initially amusing but becomes overly predictable, and it is never clear whether Mr. Dexter intended to write a novel about the western frontier or a spoof of such novels.

GREAT AND DESPERATE CURES by Elliot Valenstein. *Basic Books*, \$19.95. Treatment of mental illness by shock or surgery has lost much of the popularity it once enjoyed, and Professor Valenstein's history of such energetic measures, while disconcertingly technical in some respects, explains why. The self-interested medical politicking he describes is alarming, as is the sloppiness of the records that were kept concerning supposed cures. The author fears that similarly radical therapeutic methods may be creeping back into favor. His book is designed to warn against them.

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—Phoebe-Lou Adams



The Atlantic

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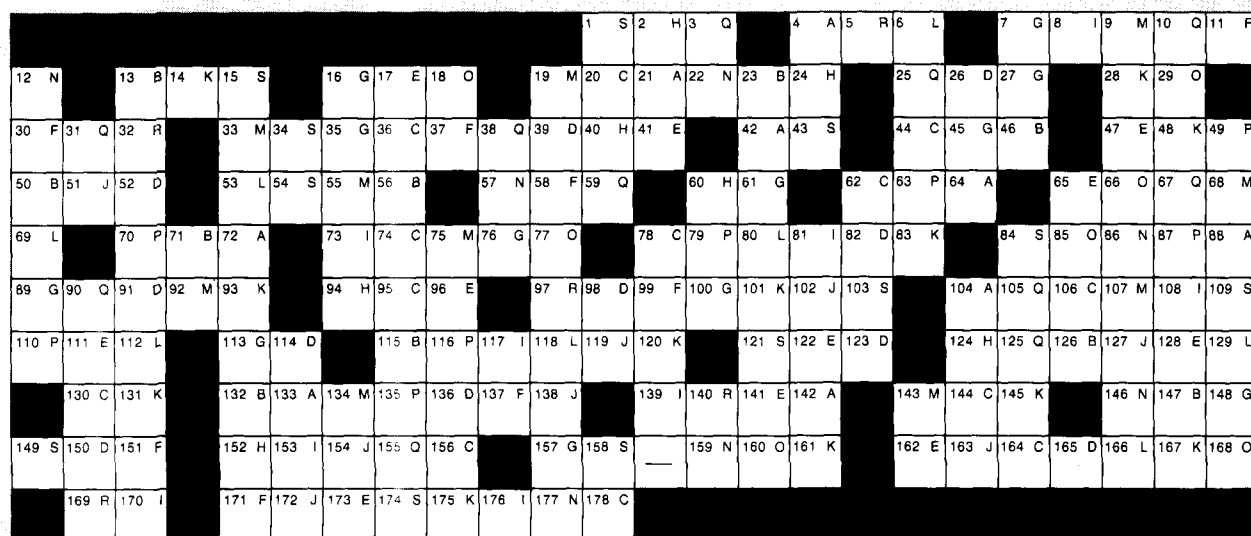
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The letters of the clue answers, when put in the appropriately numbered squares, will spell out a quotation. The first letters of clue answers spell the author and source of the quotation.



The solution to Acrostic No. 9 appears on page 100.

- A. Protégé of Pop Warner (2 wds.) 104 42 142 21 4 88 72 64 133
- B. Certain lodge members (2 wds.) 126 132 50 115 46 23 147 71 13 56
- C. Followers of the Old Man of the Mountain (hyph.) 74 20 36 62 130 78 144 178 164
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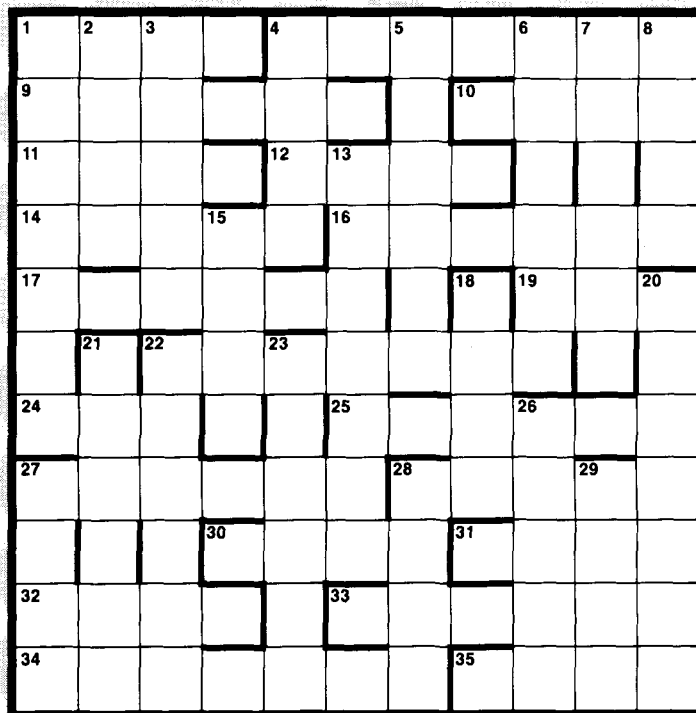
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

MATCHED SET

A number of clue answers are too long to fit in the diagram, and must have certain letters deleted before entry in the grid. The deleted letters constitute a matched set of a sort. Answers include four proper nouns and, owing in part to the exigencies of this month's theme, a smattering of uncommon words, all of which may be found in *Webster's New International Dictionary*, second or third edition.

The answers to last month's Puzzler appear on page 100.



ACROSS

1. Woman embracing two-time Moslem (6)
4. Superior welcoming vessel holds hot and cold (9) (*hyphenated*)
9. Chubby turned weak in ship's bar (8)
10. During endless season, one works (6)
11. Gunned groups of geese in marsh growth (6)
12. Delivery service circles by with shoe parts (6)
14. A quiet man with a quiet pile (7) (*two words*)
16. Stories about great English subjects (6)
17. Stupid dunce I persuade (6)
19. Went off and hesitated? (5)
22. Bag with plastic latches (7)
24. Oil company, by and by, invested in *Time* (5)
25. Around end of road, wildest twists and turns (8)
27. British madman is more heroic (6)
28. Attend to camper in sight (5)
30. Pie lying outside a portico (6)
31. Norm grabs wrong supporter (6)
32. Leaders in zoology answer quiz questions under my infernal tree (6)
33. Show the way to grim court (6)
34. Continued to ponder, back in shade (7)
35. Spruces in green spaces (6)

DOWN

5. Too flashy, like a fish? (6)
6. Stick of chewing tobacco to solidify (6)
7. Young outfits failing Yale test (8)
8. Churches exist in bottomless pit (6)
13. Choose Egyptian deity and mythical Greek (7)
15. Around mid-May, cancel yearbook (6)
18. Bit of rotten egg that is for Mr. Jackson (6)
20. Dead trees scattered small leaves (7)
21. A scrap one put on top of elephants' trunks (6)
22. Stars upset about Air Force mixups (6)
23. Belief in god is native to those people (6)
26. Large stranger is more suspicious (7)
27. Macabre-sounding fair (6)
28. Holding club, Daisy bashed Moslem bigwig (6)
29. Virginia U. taken in with Latin sucker (6)
4. Rum was winter drink (9) (*two words*)
2. He's holding a pair of jacks, and trips (6)
3. Tripped, getting caught holding kings (7)
4. Jerk ruined rear section of Machu Picchu (6)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.



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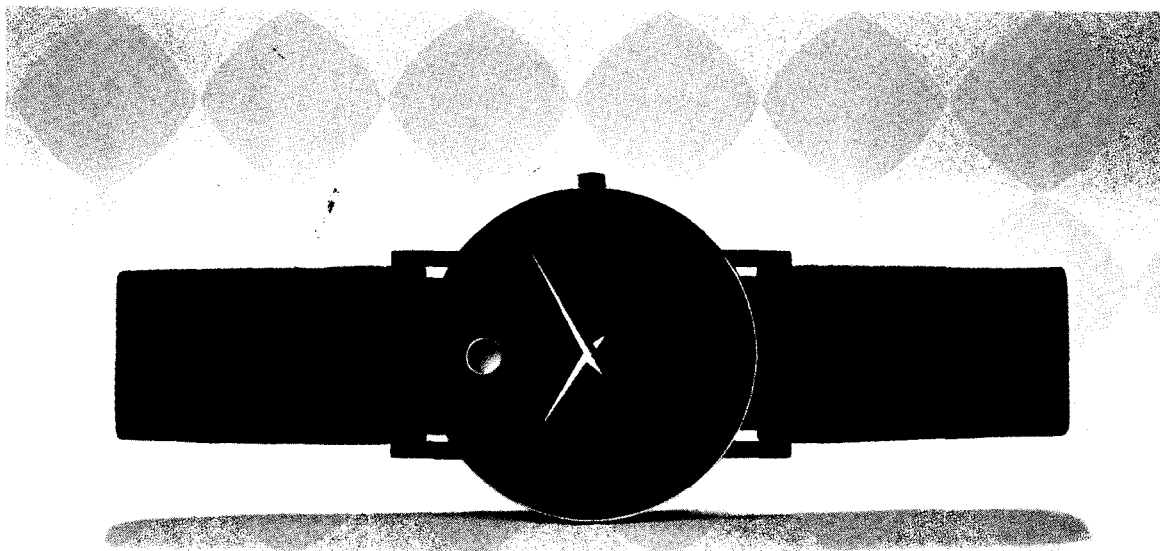
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manently adheres it to the invisible black chromium
bezel.

Hence, the "gold dot" takes on a mysterious,
floating quality.

The Movado Sapphire Museum is strikingly thin.
Inside is an electronic quartz movement that is accu-
rate to within 60 seconds a year. It never needs
winding.

Like all Movado Watches it enjoys the care of
Swiss craftsmanship. The Movado Sapphire Museum
Watch. A classic for now and future time.

MOVADO™

The Museum® Watch.

The Movado Museum dial has been a trademark of The Movado Watch Corporation for over 2 decades.
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